

*D. Valovoi  
H. Lapshina*

**NAMES  
ON  
AN OBELISK**



*Progress Publishers*



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**ИМЕНА НА ОБЕЛИСКЕ**

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## PREFACE

There is an obelisk in the Alexandrovsky Gardens of the Moscow Kremlin, erected in honour of famous thinkers, fighters for people's happiness and freedom. The history of this monument is interesting.

In April 1918, on the initiative of V. I. Lenin, founder of the Soviet state, monuments were to be erected in Moscow and other cities of the Soviet Republic to prominent socialist thinkers and leaders of the revolutionary movement.

In a conversation with A. V. Lunacharsky, People's Commissar for Education, Lenin set out a detailed plan for using monumental art as a means of propaganda. Recalling this, Lunacharsky wrote: "As early as 1918, Vladimir Ilyich called me in and said that we must begin to use art as a propaganda weapon, and added that the Utopian socialist Campanella, in his book *City of the Sun*, had dreamed of the wide use of frescoes which should rouse civic feelings and educate new generations."

Taking into account the difficulties of the times, Lenin warned that there would be no possibility of creating these works in such lasting and expensive materials as granite, marble, gold or bronze, and suggested that they should be made from plaster of Paris and concrete. The main

thing was that they should be accessible to the people, arouse thought, remind them of heroic events and of outstanding figures in the world of culture and in the revolutionary struggle.

The obelisk in the Alexandrovsky Gardens of the Kremlin became one of the very first monuments of Soviet Russia. It was unveiled in 1918 on the eve of the first anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution. There, before the eyes of the Muscovites appeared the monument with the hammer and sickle and the letters "R.S.F.S.R." on the pedestal, and with nineteen names carved on the severe grey four-sided monolith: Marx, Engels, Liebknecht, Lassalle, Bebel, Campanella, Mellier [Meslier], Winstanley, Thomas More, Saint-Simon, Vaillant, Fourier, Jaurès, Proudhon, Bakunin, Chernyshevsky, Lavrov, Mikhailovsky and Plekhanov.

The destinies of these people, their theories and practical activity differed.

The name of Karl Marx, a daring discoverer of scientific truths and a revolutionary, who for many long years led the struggle of the world's proletariat to free itself from the yoke of exploitation, is immortal; the creation of a truly scientific world outlook which gave the working class an invincible weapon for the transformation and cognition of the world is associated with this name. Marx's life and activity are a model of unselfish service to mankind, of a revolutionary exploit and of scientific inspiration.

Frederick Engels, friend and closest comrade-in-arms of Marx, belongs to the galaxy of out-

standing scientists and revolutionaries. A man of enormous, encyclopaedic knowledge and a thinker of genius, he stood together with Marx at the sources of the new teaching: scientific communism.

The names of Marx and Engels, founders of scientific communism, leaders of the international working class, justifiably open the first monument of revolutionary Russia, the country in which their ideas, plans, and thoughts on the future were given practical embodiment.

Thomas More, Winstanley, Campanella, Melier, Saint-Simon and Fourier were the founders of Utopian socialism. And even if from today's standpoint a great deal of their teaching seems naive, it should not be forgotten that it was precisely they who drew for mankind the impressive picture of a just society, and many of their ideas have been creatively refined and scientifically interpreted by the founders of Marxism-Leninism.

W. Liebknecht, Bebel, Jaurès and Vaillant played an outstanding part in the development of the working-class and socialist movements and immortalised their names by their struggle against reaction, capitalist exploitation, militarism and imperialist wars.

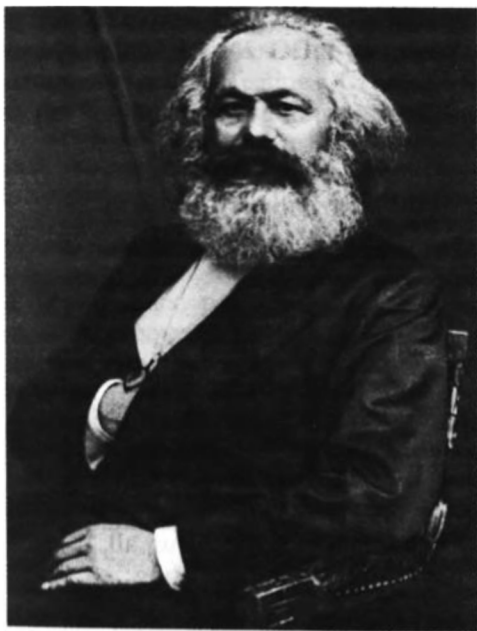
Without Chernyshevsky, Lavrov, Plekhanov, Bakunin and Mikhailovsky it would be impossible to imagine the development of the Russian revolutionary and democratic movement. The lives and activities of these people, their search for ways to free the people, reveal the full depth of Lenin's thought, that Russia "achieved Marx-

ism through agony...".<sup>1</sup>

Proudhon and Lassale, representatives of petty-bourgeois socialism, played a definite part in the working-class movement, by their books and speeches arousing an interest in socialism among the workers of France and Germany.

During their lifetime the majority of these people inspired a burning hatred of the ruling classes, were subjected to constant persecution and suffered hardships. These people, whose names are carved on the first monument of the first socialist republic, between them spent more than three hundred years in exile, in cells and jails—almost half of their conscious life.

This book tells of each of these fighters and thinkers, of their destinies and struggle for the liberation of people from oppression by the rich and powerful of the world. A short description is given of their views, and their influence on succeeding generations of fighters for freedom is shown. Naturally, it is difficult to give an exhaustive account of the scientific and practical activities of the revolutionaries in a short essay, but this is not the aim of the book. The authors have tried to tell, in a popular way, of these socialists and revolutionaries whose names are immortalised on the first revolutionary monument of the Soviet state. And if, turning over the last page, the reader wants to find out more about their lives, to turn to their literary legacy, to works which throw more light on the lives of these thinkers and fighters for freedom, the authors will feel they have fulfilled the task they set themselves.



---

**Karl Marx**  
**1818 – 1883**



## NEVER CAN I DO IN PEACE

Never can I do in peace  
That with which my Soul's obsessed,  
Never take things at my ease,  
I must press on without rest.

. . . .

Therefore let us risk our all,  
Never resting, never tiring;  
Not in silence dismal, dull,  
Without action or desiring;  
Not in brooding introspection  
Bowed beneath a yoke of pain,  
So that yearning, dream and action  
Unfulfilled to us remain.<sup>1</sup>

These verses appeared in one of the Berlin literary magazines in 1841.

The author was the young Karl Marx. Many years were to pass before he founded his scientific theory of the social renovation of the world. But even then he was surprising those around him by his analytical mind and encyclopaedic knowledge,

by the indefatigable energy and boldness of his thinking. He had a keen sense of the repulsiveness of injustice and a deep feeling of compassion for people, not for those whose houses thrust up their sumptuous stucco façades in the centre of Berlin, but for those huddled together on the outskirts of the Prussian capital. To most of his friends this was an unfamiliar feeling: one did not think seriously over such things, and, indeed, why should one? Ruined peasants? Crowds of poorly dressed people pouring out of the factory gates? Were they worth thinking about, when sitting in the sunlit lecture rooms of the university, listening to the discourse of the professor on the universal harmony of the world?

Marx did not at once create the theory of scientific communism, named after him; difficult years of struggle, irreparable losses, sleepless nights and titanic effort still lay ahead.

Karl Marx was born on the 5th of May, 1818, in Trier, Rhenish Prussia, one of the most economically and politically developed regions of Germany.

His father, Heinrich Marx, a talented person, had a tender feeling for his son and showed constant concern for his spiritual development.

In 1830 Karl entered the high school in Trier, where he was an excellent pupil, particularly successful in subjects requiring creative independence and a lively imagination. He acquired an excellent knowledge of Latin and Greek and coped easily with ancient texts. It was probably his love of ancient languages that gave Marx his distinctive

style, lively, logical and at the same time full of irony. Marx's democratic views, bursting with hatred for everything fossilised and reactionary, were being formed during this period.

In October 1835 he entered the University of Bonn and began a period of intensive study, of revision of traditional conceptions and a search for his way in life. A year later he entered the law faculty in Berlin University where the spirit of the great Hegel still "hovered".

He studied jurisprudence, history, the theory of art and foreign languages and became more and more drawn to philosophy. He also studied philosophical treatises, works by Hegel and the majority of his pupils. At the same time he drew closer to the Young Hegelians, followers of Hegel, whose bold criticism of many religious and philosophical dogmas attracted the young thinker.

From the end of the 1830s Marx devoted himself entirely to the study of philosophy, and in 1841 was awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy for his thesis "Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature". Despite the fact that Marx was still supporting the teaching of Hegel, his thesis was a new step in his philosophical development. He proclaimed the principle of the active relationship of philosophy to reality and declared his atheistic views.

This period also marks the beginning of his political activities. In October 1842 he became one of the editors of the *Rheinische Zeitung*. The articles by the young Marx, full of revolutionary

and democratic passion, determined the trend of the paper. Here, too, were to be found hatred of the feudal-monarchical system and appeals for democratic freedoms and the revolutionary struggle. Naturally, such appeals could not fail to disturb the Prussian government. Every issue of the paper was mercilessly mutilated by the censors. Marx wrote: "It is a bad thing to have to perform menial duties even for the sake of freedom; to fight with pinpricks, instead of with clubs."<sup>2</sup> At the beginning of 1843 the authorities closed down the *Rheinische Zeitung*, and in June of that year Marx was married to Jenny von Westphalen, who became his faithful companion, assistant and associate in the revolutionary struggle. The young couple first lived in Kreuznach and then moved to Paris.

Paris greeted Marx with the rustle of yellowed leaves and the rainy breath of autumn. This was his first visit to the French capital, and the most memorable and significant of all subsequent visits. It was here that in 1843-1844 he finally took up a revolutionary-communist stance, and it was here likewise that his long and loyal friendship with Frederick Engels was born.

A single issue of the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* appeared in February 1844, and in it Marx for the first time advanced the thesis that a communist transformation of society was the only real way to overcome the narrowness of the bourgeois revolution and to free mankind from its social and national fetters. He also emphasised the role of the proletariat as a social force

capable of bringing about this transformation and already spoke as a proletarian revolutionary and ideologist of the working class, "appealed to the masses and to the proletariat".<sup>3</sup>

In Paris Marx took an active part in the activities of the German émigrés, and worked on the newspaper *Vorwärts*. But in January 1845, the French authorities, to please the Prussian government, expelled its editors and staff, and Marx and his family were obliged to move to Brussels.

In Brussels the Marx family found itself without any means of livelihood. The sole source of money – payment for articles on current politics – turned out to be closed to Marx as the Brussels police forbade him to publish anything at all in the press. Frederick Engels came to the rescue. He organised a collection of funds among Marx's supporters and those holding similar views in the Rhineland, and himself sent part of the fees for his book, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*.

In Brussels Marx was up to his eyes in work. Together with Engels he completed the manuscript of *The German Ideology* in approximately six months and created a number of other works. All their previous experience of the class struggle, and theoretical analysis led them to the conclusion that only a revolutionary workers' party could raise, organise and lead the working class in the demolition of the old world. In addition, bourgeois-democratic revolutions were brewing in Europe, revolutions whose approach could be palpably felt. According to Marx, the working

class should meet them fully armed, and for this a revolutionary party was essential. As early as the beginning of 1846 Marx set up the Brussels Communist Correspondence Committee which maintained contacts with committees and groups in Great Britain, France and Germany, and led the struggle against the representatives of various trends of petty-bourgeois socialism. Engels attended the First Congress of the Communist League which took place in London in June 1847.

Reorganised by Marx and Engels, the Communist League laid the foundation of the whole subsequent history of the revolutionary working-class movement.

At the Second Congress of the League in London Marx and Engels were entrusted with the drawing up of its programme. And in February 1848 the *Communist Manifesto* was published, one of the first products of mature Marxism, testimony of the birth of scientific communism.

The revolutions of 1848–1849 in Europe became the first test of Marxism in history.

News of the overthrow in Paris of Louis Philippe, the “bankers’ king”, aroused a storm of national rejoicing in Brussels. Marx and Engels, the latter having been expelled from France not long before the events of February, shared the general joy. The long-awaited day, of which they had dreamed for so long, was approaching, the day when the hated crowns, symbols of royal power, would be sent flying into the streets of German cities.

But the reactionaries did not intend to sur-

render without a fight. Troops were brought to Brussels to provoke the workers into a premature action. Marx, who had received a legacy not long before this, donated several thousand francs to buy arms for the workers.

The Belgian police, frightened by Marx's revolutionary activities, hurriedly expelled him from the country, and on the 4th of March, the future author of *Capital* left Brussels for France. However, all his thoughts were in his native land, in Germany.

After the March battles on the barricades in Berlin, when reaction, in the person of the Prussian King Wilhelm was forced to bow before the fallen revolutionary fighters, the German émigrés in Paris were able to return home. Marx arrived in Germany in April 1848.

In Cologne he set about establishing the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* which from its very first issue became the mouthpiece of revolutionary democracy. Marx and Engels precisely determined its programme: the elimination of the Prussian and Austrian states, strongholds of reactionary systems, the creation of a single republican Germany. The *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* consistently conducted a policy of stepping up revolution, and assessed the development of the political struggle from a proletarian standpoint.

Marx became the moving spirit of the editorial board; he determined the paper's strategic line, distributed the work among the staff, carried on a voluminous correspondence, edited, and managed the finances. When the paper found



itself in financial straits he donated a considerable sum from his father's legacy. The thirty-year-old editor-in-chief had brilliant assistants: Frederick Engels, who wrote articles which were forceful and deep in content, the editorial board's secretary and journalist, Wilhelm Wolff, the poet Georg Weerth, Heinrich Bürgers, Ferdinand Wolff and others. Thanks to their talents the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* won over new supporters and aroused the hatred of the ruling classes.

In addition to his editorial work, which took up a great deal of his time and strength, Marx joined the leadership of the Democratic Society in Cologne and the Rhineland District Committee of Democrats. In the spring of 1849 he took steps to unite the workers' unions into a mass proletarian party, but an attack by the reactionaries frustrated these plans. In May 1849 the Prussian government managed to stop publication of the paper. The publishers printed the final issue of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* in red ink.

In June Marx left for Paris but in August had to move to Britain. In London he worked on the further development of the theory of scientific communism. Great credit is due to Marx's genius having worked out a scientific, materialistic philosophy. Created in co-operation with Engels, this theory is a well-balanced system of philosophical, economic and socio-political views. Marxism is the result of a critical assimilation and further development of all the previous achievements of social thinking.

In Marx's works materialism was for the first

time extended to embrace the history of human society, and for the first time the dialectical method was applied to the analysis of the laws of development of Nature, society and cognition. This was truly a revolution, the working people receiving a powerful theoretical weapon in their struggle against their oppressors.

Marx saw the freeing of man from exploitation and the replacement of the bourgeois mode of production by a new, more progressive, communist mode as the main condition of a radical change in the world. Such replacement could not come about of itself. The proletariat, under the leadership of its own party, must enter into a bitter class struggle, which would inevitably lead to a socialist revolution and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Contrary to all previous theories and religions, which proclaimed their doctrines as eternal and unalterable, scientific communism is a living, creative doctrine.

The new doctrine was inseparably bound up with the practical activity of people, with the revolutionary struggle of the working class. In "Theses on Feuerbach" Marx emphasised the decisive importance of practice, both in the life of society and in the cognitive process. The revolutionary character of communist world outlook was expressed in the concluding thesis: "The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in various ways, the point is to *change* it." <sup>4</sup>

Of course, the basic propositions of Marxism were not worked out all at once. Long years of

painstaking labour were needed for that.

*Capital* became one of Marx's most important works. He began the detailed study of the political economy of capitalism in the mid-1840s, considering that research in this particular field would enable him to understand the specific laws of capitalism. That work demanded the greatest exertion of all his powers.

The economic manuscript was ready for publication in January 1859. As a matter of fact, it included a plan for six books altogether: on capital, on landed property, on wage-labour, on the state, on foreign trade and the world market.

However, Marx hadn't a penny to send the manuscript to a publisher. It was a peculiar situation: a scholar who chose the political economy of capitalism as the subject of his research, a most prominent theoretician on questions of finance, himself had no money. As always, Engels came to his assistance. The manuscript was sent off to the publisher and soon appeared under the title *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy. Part One*. It is one of Marx's most important works. The preface to this book, in which he set out for the first time in systematic form the basic propositions of the new materialistic conception of history, is particularly well-known.

Yet Marx considered his work to be only the first approach to a theme which needed further development. *Capital* became this continuation in which the author implemented his plan for creating one of the six books outlined in *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*.

Marx began this work immediately after the publication of his first economic research. He spent hours every day in the reading room of the British Museum, filling his exercise books with detailed synopses of the books he had read. Nevertheless, all the basic theoretical work was done at home, at the desk in his modestly furnished study. The reminiscences of his friends have reconstructed the interior of this room: a large wooden chair, tables piled high with manuscripts, shelves with books and newspapers, fireplace, with photographs of relatives and his two closest friends, Frederick Engels and Wilhelm Wolff, standing on the mantelshelf above it. In the middle of the room a narrow strip of carpet worn by the endless nighttime pacing. Everything was simple, even poor. But it was precisely from here that Marx was linked by thousands of threads to the struggle of the working class; it was precisely here that, bent over the pages of his books, he saw behind the lines and the columns of figures the terms of real life.

At the end of March of 1867 the first volume of *Capital* was ready for printing and was published at the end of that year.

In the centre of Marx's study were the relationships between capital and labour, between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Capital is not simply a sum of money, accumulated by a thrifty entrepreneur, but social relationships based on shameless robbery and ruthless exploitation of hired labour. In order to determine the true place of capital in the system of socio-economic rela-

tions, Marx exposed the very essence of capitalist exploitation. Neither bourgeois economists nor Utopian socialists could solve this problem. An economist of genius, Marx, proceeding from the analysis of the properties and contradictions of commodity, arrived at the law of the appropriation by capitalists of the unpaid fraction of the worker's labour, the surplus value.

But Marx did not confine his studies to this law alone: he revealed the meaning of the basic contradiction of the capitalist system, and proved the inevitability of its downfall and the victory of the new, communist system.

Thanks to *Capital* faith in the unshakeability of capitalist society was destroyed even before its collapse began. This book helped the proletariat to find clear goals, and became a powerful weapon in the struggle to free man from exploitation. On the occasion of its first publication Engels wrote: "As long as there have been capitalists and workers on earth no book has appeared which is of as much importance for the workers as the one before us." <sup>5</sup>

Along with his research work Marx continued to take an active part in the organisation of the revolutionary movement. He played the leading role in the establishment of the International Working Men's Association, the First International, whose constituent congress took place in 1864. He headed its guiding body, the General Council. In the "Inaugural Address of the International Working Men's Association" and the "Provisional Rules of the Association", both pre-

pared by Marx, he set forth the programme principles in which he determined the revolutionary orientation of the International, and developed the idea of proletarian internationalism.

From the summer of 1870 Marx closely followed the political situation in France. Here, in the northern departments of the country, the terrible events of the Franco-Prussian war were unfolding: the capitulation of the troops of Napoleon III at Sedan, the September revolution in Paris which put an end to the regime of the Second Empire, and the proclamation of the Republic.

The new government which feared its own people more than Bismarck and the Prussian interventionists, attempted to disarm the National Guard. On the night of March 17, 1871 the troops loyal to the government moved to the Montmartre, to remove the cannon of the National Guard, but the attempt failed. The indignant people took power into their own hands, and on the 26th of March the Commune was proclaimed in Paris.

Marx followed the development of events with keen interest and concern, avidly seizing on every scrap of news about the Commune. But the bourgeois press deliberately misrepresented events, painting the Communards in the blackest of colours, spreading stories of the "lawlessness and terror", perpetrated by the Communards. But even in this flood of lies Marx succeeded in finding some grains of truth. A little later on he succeeded in making contact with the Paris section

of the International Working Men's Association. Marx warned the Communards of the possibility of a counter-revolutionary deal between Bismarck and Thiers; he welcomed many of the actions of the Parisians.

At the same time he called on the Social-Democrats of various countries to display solidarity with the Commune. He called on the workers of Britain, Germany, Austria and other countries to organise mass actions in support of the Parisians.

Meanwhile, the news arriving from Paris was becoming worse and worse. With the help of Bismarck, Thiers, recovered from his fright, led an attack on the Commune. In May fighting was already in the city itself. The Versailles troops captured one district after another, shooting Communard prisoners without trial. It was painful to Marx to learn about the inhuman acts of revenge by the exultant bourgeoisie. In fact it affected his health and for several days he had to stay in bed.

On May 30, 1871, when the Communards were defending the last barricades in Paris, Marx read out to the General Council the text of an appeal entitled "The Civil War in France." He gave a profound analysis of the Paris Commune, and cautioned future revolutionary actions by the workers to avoid its mistakes. In the appeal Marx emphasised that the Commune was the first experience of the dictatorship of the proletariat, demonstrated the necessity of destroying the old state machinery and of uniting with the other sections of the working population.



In the later years of his life Marx devoted a great deal of attention to the further development of the theory of revolution, the formation of proletarian parties in individual countries, and the strengthening of contacts among them.

He was deeply interested in Russia and his contacts with representatives of the Russian revolutionary movement became stronger year by year. He had a high regard for Russian democratic literature, and considered that Russia could play an important part in the world revolutionary process. He was fifty-two years old when he decided to learn Russian, considering it impossible to study the agrarian question without studying original sources on the property-in-land relations in Russia.

Reading the work of the Russian sociologist and economist V. V. Bervi-Flerovsky in the original, Marx wrote: "Flerovsky's book *The Condition of the Working Class in Russia* is an outstanding work. I am very glad that I am now able to read it rather easily with the aid of a dictionary. Here the economic condition of Russia is depicted completely for the first time. It is a conscientious work. For fifteen years the author travelled the country, from its Western borders to Eastern Siberia, from the White Sea to the Caspian with the single aim of studying the facts and exposing the traditional falsehood... After studying his work one becomes firmly convinced that a mighty social revolution is inevitable in the near future in Russia, naturally, in the elementary forms corresponding to the present level of devel-

opment of Muscovy. This is good news. Russia and Britain are the two great pillars of the contemporary European system. All the others are of secondary importance, even la belle France and scholarly Germany.”<sup>6</sup>

Marx obtained data on the conditions and the struggle of the masses and on the history of progressive social thought from the works of Herzen, Chernyshevsky, Bervi-Flerovsky, Nekrasov, Dobrolyubov and Pushkin. In his correspondence with Russian revolutionaries the constant theme was a discussion of the problems of a Russian revolution. Marx carefully studied the causes of the revolutionary situation, connected with the struggle against serfdom.

At the London Conference of the International in 1871 Marx said that there was a very strong spirit of internationalism and solidarity among the Russian working class. On the tenth anniversary of the Paris Commune, Marx and Engels foretold that the developing revolutionary movement in Russia would inevitably lead to the setting up of a Russian Commune.

Marx had to bear all the hardships of émigré life: bourgeois governments constantly persecuted him, his family often lacked the barest necessities. His wife and faithful companion, Jenny, shared all the troubles of his hard life: his wanderings, emigration, poverty and persecution. Of their seven children only three daughters, Jenny, Laura and Eleanor survived. His wife was Marx's closest helper and adviser, his “good angel”. She lived to see the name of Marx become the symbol of

a new struggling world, from Russia to America.

Jenny and Engels played an exceptional part in Marx's life.

Marx greatly appreciated Jenny's sense of humour, her refined aesthetic taste and extensive knowledge. In spite of the cares and burdens of family life Jenny was for many years his irreplaceable secretary, copied all his works, corresponded with many of the leaders of the international working-class movement and took to heart everything connected with this movement.

Many of his contemporaries realised Marx's greatness. Whoever had occasion to associate with the great thinker, afterwards spoke and wrote of the all-embracing character of his genius, his colossal erudition, the overwhelming power of his mind and talent. Acquaintance with his works shows the power and many-sidedness of Marx's genius. His greatness lies in the fact that he gave answers to questions which had been placed on the agenda by the whole course of historical development. He revolutionised the views on nature and society.

Many of his contemporaries remarked that he was an exceptionally unassuming, accessible and sociable person. His daughter Jenny once asked him to fill in a questionnaire in his leisure time. This questionnaire subsequently became widely known under the name of "Confession".

**Question:** Your favourite virtue?

**Answer:** Simplicity.

Marx not only valued this quality in others but was himself a very simple, modest person. People

came to his house from Siberia and America, from Manchester factories and Parisian salons, and each of them was given the necessary advice and support. But he "thundered" at anyone who displayed the slightest sign of "idolatry". Once, when he was going to visit his elder daughter he warned her, in a specially written letter, not to worry about the precise date and hour of his arrival and not to let anyone know of his intentions. Marx explained that nothing upset his equilibrium as much as people meeting him at a railway station.

**Question:** What quality do you value most of all in a man?

**Answer:** Strength.

**Question:** Your chief characteristic?

**Answer:** Singleness of purpose.

**Question:** Your idea of happiness?

**Answer:** To fight.

At the beginning of the 1880s Marx's health deteriorated noticeably. His wife died in December 1881, and his eldest daughter, Jenny, in January 1883. These misfortunes sapped the remaining strength of the great thinker and he died on the 14th of March, 1883. He was buried in Highgate Cemetery, in London, on March 17, 1883. Here Engels pronounced the prophetic words: "Both his name and his work will endure for centuries."

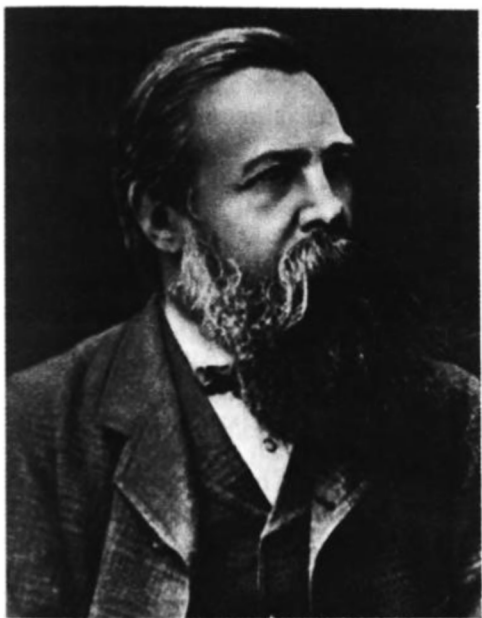
The October Revolution of 1917 in Russia ushered in the epoch of the downfall of capitalism and the transition of society to socialism and communism. All subsequent events in the interna-

tional arena—the formation of a world socialist system, the enormous expansion and deepening of the revolutionary process, including the gigantic scale of the national liberation movement—are directly associated with the ideas of Marx.

Even bourgeois ideologists have been obliged to acknowledge the unconquerable strength of Marxism.

The well-known American author, Edmund Wilson, writes in his book *To the Finland Station*, that the teaching of Marx is a complete and consistent theory which uncovered more secrets in the past, cleared up more complex problems in the present, and opened a more practical way to the future than any other previous theory.

Incidentally, it still remains a puzzle to bourgeois writers and scholars why the teaching of Marx became the movement of millions of workers. There can be only one answer: Marx drew on the solid foundation of human knowledge gained under capitalism. He studied the laws of development of human society and arrived at the conclusion about the inevitability of the development of capitalism leading to social transformations and a socialist revolution. He refined all that human thought had created, subjected it to criticism, tested it in practice on the working-class movement and drew those conclusions that people enmeshed in bourgeois prejudices had been unable to draw.



---

**Frederick Engels**  
**1820–1895**

## AN ENCOUNTER WHICH LASTED FORTY YEARS

In August 1844, on his way back to Germany from England, Frederick Engels went to Paris to become closer acquainted with Karl Marx. Each had heard quite a lot about the other, they had even caught a fleeting glimpse of one another in the editorial office of the *Rheinische Zeitung*, but there had been no close personal contacts. Now here he was in Paris, in the modest flat of Dr. Karl Marx in rue Vanneau, enjoying endless conversations until late into the night. They both felt that they were like-minded people. They thought the same way not only in the common business to which they had both dedicated themselves, but in spirit and interests, too. They felt that elusive sympathy towards one another which grows into friendship. The ten days spent in Paris simply flew by. Parting, they were still not aware that this encounter would become a meeting destined to last forty years.

“Old legends,” wrote Lenin, “contain various moving instances of friendship. The European



proletariat may say that its science was created by two scholars and fighters, whose relationship to each other surpasses the most moving stories of the ancients about human friendship.”<sup>1</sup>

Frederick Engels was born on the 28th of November, 1820, in the town of Barmen, in the Rhineland Province of Prussia, to the family of a manufacturer. In 1834 he entered the high school in Elberfeld, but his father decided that his eldest son should become a businessman, so Frederick, was compelled to leave school a year before the end of his course and enter business. Nevertheless, he stubbornly continued his self-education in his free time. He made deep studies of the works of philosophers, historians and economists, and mastered a number of foreign languages.

The young Engels looked closely and attentively at the world around him. When he saw the poverty of the textile workers he was revolted and did not hide his feelings, thereby arousing a storm of indignation in his father. In 1839 in his *Letters from Wuppertal* he stigmatised the inhumanity of the propertied classes: “Terrible poverty prevails among the lower classes, particularly the factory workers,” he wrote. “But the wealthy manufacturers have a flexible conscience.”<sup>2</sup> The sense of justice, already present in the young Engels, drew him to simple toilers, to working people whose hands had created all the wealth of the world. And the stronger his sympathy and affection for them, the greater became his hatred of their oppressors, the bourgeoisie and the feudal lords.

After completing his military service in November 1842 he moved to Manchester (England) on the insistence of his father, to learn commerce and management in the spinning mill of "Ermen & Engels".

In England he saw for himself what a high level of capitalist development leads to—still greater luxury, still higher profits and still fiercer exploitation. Engels was staggered by the contrasts he saw in Manchester. But England allowed him to make another discovery: the proletariat was not only a suffering class but also a fighting one. He closely followed the developing Chartist movement, and got to know many of its leaders. His first articles, written in England and published in the *Rheinische Zeitung*, reveal the maturing of his socialist convictions.

He was not yet twenty-five when he wrote *The Condition of the Working-Class in England*, one of the finest works in world socialist literature. "Engels was the *first* to say," emphasised Lenin, "that the proletariat is *not only* a suffering class; that it is, in fact, the disgraceful economic condition of the proletariat that drives it irresistibly forward and compels it to fight for its ultimate emancipation. And the fighting proletariat *will help itself*. The political movement of the working class will inevitably lead the workers to realise that their only salvation lies in socialism. On the other hand, socialism will become a force only when it becomes the aim of the *political* struggle of the working *class*." <sup>3</sup>

After his meeting with Marx, Engels returned

to Germany where he took an active part in organising mass meetings and debates, in setting up communist press organs and in mass actions against the feudal policy of the government. But his revolutionary activity could not remain unnoticed by the Prussian police. In the spring of 1845 he moved to Brussels where he and Marx jointly set about elaborating a revolutionary theory.

At the beginning of 1847 Marx and Engels joined the League of the Just. This was an organisation in London which united a small number of workers, mostly émigrés. The programme of the League whose slogan looked attractive – “All Men Are Brothers” – had a utopian character and, of course, could in no way satisfy Marx and Engels. After they joined it, the League of the Just was transformed into the Communist League. The new organisation was founded at a congress which took place in London in June 1847, at which Engels represented the Paris communists. The Congress prepared new Rules and adopted the new name. Its old motto was replaced by the revolutionary class slogan, “Working Men of All Countries, Unite!”

In October 1847 Engels was again in Paris actively helping in the preparations for the Second Congress of the Communist League. He drew up a draft programme for the League, entitled “Principles of Communism”. This work served as a basis for the later work, the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*.

On the 25th of February, 1848, the Paris workers overthrew the monarchy of Louis Phi-

lippe and proclaimed the Second Republic. The French workers once again found themselves at the head of the European movement. Marx returned to France on the invitation of the Republican Government, and on the 20th of March Engels arrived in Paris from Brussels. In April he and Marx, together with a group of their closest supporters, returned to Germany. Taking an active part in the revolutionary movement they founded the militant organ of revolutionary democracy, the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*. From its pages they called upon the German people to launch a resolute struggle against feudalism and absolutism, exposed the treachery of the bourgeoisie, and the cowardice and inconsistency of the petty-bourgeois democrats. With the help of their newspaper Marx and Engels directed the activities of the democratic organisations and led the struggle of the masses. Engels wrote a series of articles on the Paris uprising of June 1848. With great talent and profound knowledge of the subject, Engels threw light on the course of the war of liberation in Italy and Hungary against the Austrian monarchy. At the end of September the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* suspended publication on the orders of the authorities, and Engels, in view of a threatened arrest, fled to Switzerland.

In May of 1849 an armed revolutionary struggle was launched in the Rhineland province and Southern Germany. August Willich, a member of the Communist League, raised a detachment of volunteers which Engels joined and went through the whole campaign in Pfalz and Baden. He car-

ried out the most dangerous tasks and during the battles was always in the front line. Only when the revolution was finally defeated did Engels leave Germany, together with the last remnants of the defeated revolutionary army. Soon afterwards he moved to London. Marx was already there and together they began to reorganise and strengthen the Communist League, at the same time Engels continued his scholarly activity.

In November 1850, Engels' father insisted that he move to Manchester and begin work in the "Ermen & Engels". However much Engels hated his new occupation, however much he dreamed of leisure to pursue his scholarly research, a strong desire to give financial support to Marx and his family impelled him to comply with his father's wishes. He was prepared to make any sacrifice to help his friend complete his work on *Capital*.

Their friendship did not weaken with the years. On the contrary, with every new meeting they found new virtues in one another, drew new strength for their own creative work. Marx informed Engels of all the fundamental conclusions he arrived at in the course of his studies, and asked for his comments. Before answering the questions put to him, Engels would subject them to a profound theoretical analysis.

Both during the period of his co-operation with Marx, and after the latter's death Engels wrote a number of outstanding independent works: *Anti-Dühring*, *Dialectics of Nature*, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, and many others.

The scholarly *Anti-Dühring* is one of the profound creations of Marxism. It brings together the totality of theoretical conclusions and principles of Marxism. It describes socialism as a new social system, free from antagonistic class contradictions and the exploitation of man by man. The basic propositions of Marxist philosophy are clearly and convincingly set out, and the scientific foundations of economic theory are laid down in detail. The author dwelt on the description of production relations, showed their historically transient nature and the objective necessity for capitalist relations to be replaced by communist.

In his works Engels pays great attention to the organisation of production. In particular, he noted the importance of combining the conscious organisation of social production with planned distribution. "Historical evolution makes such an organisation daily more indispensable, but also with every day more possible. From it will date a new epoch of history, in which mankind itself, and with mankind all branches of its activity, and particularly natural science, will experience an advance that will put everything preceding it in the deepest shade," wrote Engels.<sup>4</sup>

Another of Engels' works, *Dialectics of Nature*, on which he spent more than ten years, is directly connected with *Anti-Dühring*. In it he gave a philosophical generalisation of all the most significant achievements of natural sciences of his day. It contains a profound critique of mechanistic materialism and of the idealistic theories of bourgeois scholars and their metaphysical method

Drawing on scientific data, Engels presented a general picture of the dialectical development of nature from the simplest and lowest (known at that time) forms of movement of matter, to the origin and development of life, the appearance of Man and the development of human society. He called for close study of the transition of one form of movement of matter into another, thereby calling for the elimination of the gap between separate natural sciences. In this work Engels anticipated some of the later achievements of science in the fields of physics and chemistry, biology and psychology.

Engels outlived Marx by twelve years, during which he enriched Marxist theory by new discoveries and conclusions. With the skill and energy of a true revolutionary leader he performed the duties of an ideological mentor to the Social-Democratic parties of Europe and America. Numerous representatives of the struggling workers and progressive intelligentsia from various countries turned to him for advice and support and he generously shared with them his great knowledge and experience.

Engels performed a truly heroic deed of a communist scientist in preparing the second and third volumes of *Capital*. After Marx's death the opponents of Marxism began to spread the story that Marx had not got beyond the first volume of *Capital*, and that talk of a planned second volume was nothing more than "a subterfuge" on his part to avoid scientific polemics with critics of his theories of value and surplus value, expounded in the first volume.

However, a bundle containing the manuscripts of the second and third volumes of *Capital* was found among Marx's effects, but neither Engels nor anyone else knew what condition they were in and to what extent they had been prepared for publication. What was to be done with Marx's unfinished work on *Capital*? This question troubled many socialists and they turned to Engels with hope. A truly gigantic work had to be done: to read through the author's manuscripts, written in illegible script, to decipher the numerous notes and abbreviations. Undoubtedly, only Engels could cope with this task.

Engels hoped at first to have the second volume ready for publication in a comparatively short time, but in October 1883 he fell ill and this lost him at least six months. His illness reminded Engels of what might happen to him too at any moment. The "rough work" had to be done urgently: the text of the manuscripts were to be dictated to a specially hired scribe, which was an enormous task, requiring a great deal of time. Recurrences of his illness forced Engels to leave his desk, but nevertheless he continued to dictate, lying on a sofa, from ten in the morning to five in the afternoon every day, and then spent the evenings in preliminary editing of the day's dictation. The second volume of Marx's *Capital*, edited by Engels, was published in July 1885.

The difficulties involved in preparing the third volume surpassed all Engels' original expectations. He spent approximately ten years on it. When working on the third volume Engels as far



as possible conveyed the results of Marx's research in the latter's own words. He limited his own interference in the text of the manuscripts to what was absolutely essential. Engels supplied this volume of *Capital* with a comprehensive preface in which he described the condition of the manuscripts and his own work on them, and exposed the bourgeois falsifiers of the materialist view of history and the economic teaching of Marx.

His work on the second and third volumes of *Capital* was one of the supreme creative achievements of Engels, a great exploit in the name of friendship, of science and in the interests of the working class of all countries.

His book *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy* played an important part in the development of the international revolutionary movement. In the 1880s the spread of the fashionable bourgeois philosophy trend, neo-Kantianism, in Europe, the aim of which was a reactionary reassessment of classical German philosophy, made such a work essential. In this book Engels critically examined the philosophical sources of scientific communism, pointed out the services of Hegel in the development of dialectical thought and of Feuerbach in the development of materialism. In doing so he showed that in the process of the creation of Marxist philosophy, both the idealistic dialectics of Hegel and the metaphysical materialism of Feuerbach had been overcome, and as a result, dialectical materialism had been created.

Engels scientifically substantiated the thesis that

the basic question of philosophy is that concerning the relations of thinking and being, of matter and spirit. For the working-class movement the materialist approach to the given question is the main criterion in the theoretical battle of two philosophies, and enables it to engage in philosophical discussions with bourgeois ideologists.

The concluding section of the work is devoted to the laws governing social development. Here he explained why the discovery of materialist dialectics enabled him and Marx to go further than Feuerbach; revealed the essence of the revolution in opinions on the laws governing the development of nature, society and cognition brought about by them.

*Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy* serves the international revolutionary movement as a splendid theoretical aid in the struggle against bourgeois philosophy. It helps socialists to expose supporters of idealistic philosophy in their ranks and carry on an uncompromising struggle against them.

Engels wrote many of his works at the request of socialists in various countries. As a rule they were produced because of sheer practical necessity. Thus, in order to help the French socialists to overcome the opportunist vacillations over the agrarian question and explain the basic propositions of Marxism, Engels wrote in 1894 an article entitled "The Peasant Question in France and Germany", in which a further big stride was made in the development of the Marxist theory

on the peasant question. He showed that a proletarian party can only gain political power when it has developed agitation among the peasantry and become strong in the countryside. Engels emphasised that the only way to a radical improvement in peasant life was to go over from small-scale farming to collective production, to associations, and this should be implemented by example and not forcibly. The policy of a proletarian state towards large-scale bourgeois landowning should be quite different. The victorious proletariat would expropriate this property just as they would expropriate that of industrialists. At the same time Engels, allowing the possibility of compensation wrote: "Whether this expropriation is to be compensated for or not, will to a great extent depend not on us but the circumstances under which we obtain power, and particularly on the attitude adopted by ... the big landowners... We by no means consider compensation as impermissible in any event; Marx told me (and how many times!) that in his opinion we would get off cheapest if we could buy out the whole lot of them." 5

Engels attentively followed the revolutionary movement in Russia, and carried on an active correspondence with many Russian progressive figures. Analysing the working-class movement in Germany, France, the United States and Russia, Engels said that in his opinion Russia would play a most important role in the near future. The name of Engels was well known in Russia as that of the faithful friend and comrade-in-arms of

**Karl Marx.** Many letters and telegrams of condolence were sent to him on the death of Marx. The students of the Petrovskaya Academy in Moscow in their telegram to Engels asked him to lay a wreath on Marx's coffin carrying the following message: "To the defender of the rights of labour in theory and a fighter for their realisation. From the students of the Petrovskaya Agricultural Academy in Moscow."

Engels continued to work intensively to the end of his life. Two years before his death he wrote a pamphlet "Can Europe Disarm?" in which he came to the conclusion that "the system of standing armies throughout Europe has been carried to such an extreme that either the peoples will be economically ruined by it, unable to bear the burden of military costs, or else it will inevitably lead to an all-out destructive war unless the standing armies are not in good time transformed into a militia, based on a general arming of the people".<sup>6</sup> Engels had proceeded from the premise that disarmament – and, consequently, a guarantee of peace – was possible. This proposition of Frederick Engels that peace can be preserved is applied by Communist parties today in their practical activities. The first decree of the Soviet power was the Decree on Peace. The first steps of the young socialist state in the international arena were directed towards the establishment of good-neighbourly relations, and co-operation, the ending of wars and the armaments race. With the appearance of the Soviet state the struggle to prevent wars for the first time in history, acquired a

material basis and became a political reality.

In the last years of his life Engels became the sole ideological leader of the international working-class movement. All the burdens of leadership of the movement, previously shared with Marx, now lay entirely on his shoulders. His house in London was a sort of international headquarters for revolutionaries. From it he maintained contacts with socialists in Britain, Germany, France, Russia, the USA and other countries. Correspondence in many languages of the world arrived here from socialist and workers' organisations. Plans for the consolidation of the international working-class movement in the new crucial period of its development were worked out here, and the initiative of the revolutionary actions by the working class found support.

Engels considered one of his most important tasks to be the foundation of a new, socialist International. By the 1880s independent proletarian organisations existed in the majority of European countries and the strengthening of their solidarity was becoming a more and more pressing task. At the end of the 1880s European Social-Democracy undertook the work of preparing for a constituent congress, and Engels applied all his efforts to ensure that the new international organisation was set up on a firm Marxist foundations. His work did not go in vain.

As many as 407 delegates, representing 22 nations, gathered in Paris on July 14, 1889, at the first congress of Marxists. The congress halls were hung with slogans: "Workers of all coun-

tries, unite!", and "Political and economic expropriation of the capitalist class, socialisation of the means of production!" The Congress formulated a series of programme demands for labour legislation, for holding annual demonstrations on the 1st of May to secure an eight-hour working day, and international working-class solidarity. The festival of working people's solidarity observed on the 1st of May, 1890, was convincing evidence of the strengthened unity within the working-class movement; it was a review of the increased forces of the proletariat. The Second International concentrated its attention on the development of mass proletarian parties and organisations in separate countries. Its task was to prepare the international working class for the proletarian revolution.

In 1893, in spite of his advancing years and ill-health, Engels travelled round a number of European countries, carrying on active revolutionary Marxist propaganda work. He arrived in Zurich on August 12 to attend the international socialist congress at which the political tactics of Social-Democracy, the tasks of the fight for the eight-hour working day, work in the trade unions and the agrarian question were all discussed. He was everywhere greeted with thunderous applause.

In his speech Engels sharply criticised anarchism, which was at the centre of congress discussions. He pointed out that by their rejection of the strategy and tactics of the proletariat and their denial of the party's leading role, the anarchists were misleading the working class and

betraying its interests. He strongly condemned the opportunists who naively supposed that socialism could be attained with the aid of the ballot box alone. He called for preserving a revolutionary unity under all circumstances in the struggle against capitalism.

At the beginning of September Engels, in company with August Bebel, left Zurich for Vienna, travelling via Munich and Salzburg. And again there were welcomes from Social-Democrats, efforts by Engels to avoid loud praises, and again he reminded them of the tasks of the working-class parties.

From Vienna his route took him through Germany to London. This journey turned into a real triumphal march of the ideas of scientific communism. Meeting with the Social-Democrats of Austria and Germany, Engels became convinced that the theory of scientific communism had become the weapon of the revolutionary section of the working class. And the workers who had the good fortune to see and hear Engels, marvelled at the revolutionary passion and principled staunchness of their working-class leader, by his human warmth and modesty.

But age and the hard life of a revolutionary inexorably made themselves felt, although physical weakness could not deprive Engels of courage. He countered it with self-discipline and a sense of duty. His bold spirit was not broken. In March 1895, he was again overcome by illness; and on the 5th of August, 1895, at half past ten in the evening, the heart of this outstanding scholar-re-

volutionary, one of the founders of scientific communism, stopped. The international working-class movement lost its great fighter and thinker. On his insistence only his closest friends, disciples and associates took part in the funeral ceremony on August 10. "There are only a few present here," said Wilhelm Liebknecht, "but these few represent millions, the entire world ... they will prepare the end to capitalism. Engels showed us all the way, and he was the guide along the way, he was a leader and a fighter, theory and practice were united in him."





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**Wilhelm Liebknecht**  
**1826-1900**

## NO COMPROMISES!

In his preface to the Russian translation of Liebknecht's pamphlet "No Compromises, No Electoral Agreements" Lenin wrote: "Liebknecht does not in the least deny that agreements with the bourgeois opposition parties are 'useful', both from the standpoint of obtaining 'seats in parliament' and from the standpoint of enlisting an 'ally' (a supposed ally) against the common enemy—reaction. But the true political acumen and the staunch Social-Democratism of this veteran German socialist are revealed by the fact that he *does not limit himself* to these considerations. He examines the question whether the 'ally' is not an enemy in disguise whom it would be particularly dangerous to admit to our ranks; whether and in what way he actually fights against the common enemy; whether agreements, while being useful as a means of obtaining a larger number of seats in parliament, are not detrimental to the more permanent and more profound aims of the proletariat

ian party... Liebknecht teaches us", Lenin continued, "that a Social-Democrat must be able to expose the dangerous aspects of every ally in the bourgeois camp and not conceal them."<sup>1</sup>

Wilhelm Liebknecht was born on the 29th of March, 1826, in the town of Giessen, to the family of an official. His mother died when he was five years old and his father died a year later. During his studies at the high school he showed himself to be a talented youth, and read a great deal, including the works of the socialist Saint-Simon. At the age of sixteen he entered the university in Giessen and then moved to Berlin where he studied philosophy, philology and theology. During his time at university Liebknecht took an active part in undergraduate discussions on the essence of Christianity, on the organisation of labour and the nature of the future society. After completing his studies in Berlin he returned to Giessen, on the way there visiting Swiss Saxony and Bohemia which at that time formed part of the Austrian Empire. However, the authorities suspected him of participating in the Cracow uprising and expelled him from the country. This was the first of a long series of expulsions and police repressions against him.

The mid-1840s became for him a search for his true vocation. At one time he dreamed of an academic career, but coming up against the bureaucratic discipline, the worship of rank and red tape prevalent in so many of the country's universities, he came to the conclusion that it would only be possible by sacrificing his principles.

Liebknrecht was more and more attracted towards political activity. He looked closely at various political groupings, becoming familiar with their programmes. Himself an irreproachably honest man, who sympathised with the ordinary working men, he concluded that the Liberals, and even less so the ruling classes, could not bring the people freedom. On his own admission he became a communist in 1846. The study of literature, particularly the works of Marx and Engels, played an important part in Liebknrecht's attraction to socialism.

In the summer of 1847 he was in Switzerland where he began to work as teacher in Karl Fröbel's private school. It was here that for the first time he tried his hand in the field of journalism. In September 1847 he became a correspondent for the opposition German newspaper *Mannheimer Abendzeitung*, and immediately proved himself a very talented journalist. Over the next six months he published approximately a hundred articles on the most varied topics. He was soon noticed and offered the editorship of a Zurich newspaper.

But his editorial career came to a sudden stop: in February 1848 he already was in revolutionary Paris. The free air of Paris turned the heads of not only the Parisians alone. The idea of forming a legion that would carry revolution to Germany was conceived among the German political émigrés. Liebknrecht was among the first to volunteer, but the venture failed, and the corps disintegrated before it had had time to form. Moreover

Liebkecht himself was confined to bed by illness for a long time. He would have to recover his health and wait to see how Germany would react to the events of February. And Germany reacted.

In the spring of 1848 revolution broke out in the country. Liebkecht was not able to take part in it immediately: the after-effects of his illness told on him, and it was only in autumn that together with two of his friends he tried to reach Baden to join the uprising led by the bourgeois democrat Gustav Struve. The attempt was unsuccessful and Liebkecht and his companions fell into the hands of government troops.

After he was released Liebkecht went at once to Karlsruhe, the capital of the duchy, which was the centre of the Baden events. Here he became adjutant to Struve, whom he had been unable to join the year before. But the Baden insurrection was crushed, and on the 5th of June, 1849, he was once again arrested and sent to Rastatt prison. He was set free after three days by soldiers he had won over by his propaganda through the prison window. Thereafter he took part in the last battles against the Prussian troops and together with the remnants of the republican army fled across the border into Switzerland. Once again Germany was closed to him; this time for a long time, for a whole thirteen years.

Having settled in Geneva Liebkecht became close to the young émigré circle. In the summer of 1849, he first met Engels, who was also living in Switzerland. His acquaintanceship with Engels

had a fruitful influence on the subsequent activity of Wilhelm Liebknecht. In August 1849 he joined the General Association of German Workers in Geneva and was soon elected its president. A congress of the association was scheduled for February 1850, but the authorities banned it. Together with a number of delegates Liebknecht was arrested and was in solitary confinement for nearly two months, after which he was expelled from Switzerland. There was nothing left for him to do but go to England, which at that time was a refuge for exiles. Here in London Liebknecht met Marx and very quickly became a friend of his family.

His friendship with Marx had a great beneficial effect on Liebknecht. In the maelstrom of political passions that was shaking London émigré circles, only Marx and Engels knew exactly what had to be done to organise a proletarian revolutionary movement. Marx became Liebknecht's political teacher, and it was thanks to him alone that he was able to cast off the last traces of petty-bourgeois socialism and to think in the spirit of Marx's scientific theory.

He returned to Germany in 1862, where portentous events were already happening. In May 1863, Ferdinand Lassalle founded the General Association of German Workers in the city of Leipzig. At first Liebknecht kept aloof from this organisation but then in the autumn of 1863 he joined it and became active in it. In his speeches he called for expanding and strengthening trade union organisations and acquainted the workers

with the works of Marx and Engels. He also had meetings with Lassalle, who tried to convince him that Bismarck was not such a reactionary as he was painted. But such ideas were already unacceptable to Liebknecht. In a speech to the printing workers which he made on the 28th of February, 1865, he said that neither the Progressist Party nor the Prussian state could satisfy the social demands of the workers. All talk of government help was charlatanism. Only the complete destruction of the bourgeois state would be of any real help to the workers.

Liebknecht's activities attracted police attention and in the summer of 1865 he was expelled from Berlin and Prussia as presenting "a threat to the security of the state". He settled in Leipzig, the capital of Saxony, where he got to know the young lathe-operator, August Bebel, who was chairman of the Workers' Educational Association. Bebel noted that acquaintance with Liebknecht accelerated his own transformation into a socialist. "Bebel," wrote Lenin, "found in Liebknecht just what he wanted—living contact with the great work done by Marx in 1848, contact with the party formed at that time, which, though small, was genuinely proletarian, a living representative of Marxist views and Marxist traditions." 2

Liebknecht did not confine himself to work with the German proletariat only. A true internationalist he took part in the organisation of the First International. He was, unfortunately, unable to attend the constituent Congress in London, to

which he had been personally invited by Marx, and had to limit himself to sending a written report on the state of the German working-class movement. In Leipzig he continued his propaganda work in behalf of the International, which yielded definite results: at the beginning of 1866, twelve committee members of the Leipzig Educational Association joined the International Working Men's Association.

As a result of the Austro-Prussian war of 1866 the North German Confederation was formed, which established Prussian hegemony in Germany. The unification of Germany "from above" was nearing completion. Events were not developing as Liebknecht and Bebel had contemplated, but they preserved their orientation towards a revolutionary overthrow of the existing order and a democratic unification of the country. Such a line was the only possible one for revolutionaries who did not want to adapt their policy to Prussian autocracy.

Liebknecht was elected to the Reichstag as a deputy from the North German Confederation in August 1867, and worked there in co-operation with Bebel. Following the instructions of Marx and Engels they made skilful use of the parliamentary rostrum to expose the militarism and the reactionary domestic and foreign policies of the Prussian Junkers. During the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-1871, together with Bebel, Liebknecht opposed the aggressive plans of the Junkers and the bourgeoisie, and adopted an internationalist position.



At the Nuremberg Congress of 1868 the workers' associations headed by Liebknecht and Bebel, dissociated themselves from the bourgeois-democratic trends. The most important decision of this congress was to adopt the programme of the International Working Men's Association. In 1869 at the congress in Eisenach, as a result of the Nuremberg Association of Workers' Unions formed in 1868 with the left elements of Lassalle's General Association of German Workers, the German Social-Democratic Workers' Party was set up (the Eisenachers) which became the foundation of the revolutionary organisation of the German working class.

The Eisenach Congress marked a turning point in the development of the German proletariat. The creation of the German Social-Democratic Workers' Party was the most significant event not only in the German, but in the whole international working-class movement. The credit for the creation of such a party goes to Wilhelm Liebknecht.

In 1869 a newspaper *Volksstaat* was founded under the leadership of Liebknecht and Bebel. Officially it was the organ of the Social-Democratic Workers' Party and the international trade unions, but in fact it was also the organ of the International in Germany. It regularly carried material on the activities of the General Council and sections of the International Working Men's Association. In September 1869 Liebknecht attended the Congress of the International Working Men's Association in Basle as the

representative of the German Social-Democratic Workers' Party. The congress discussed the questions of land ownership of the right of inheritance and the role of the trade unions.

On his return to Germany Liebknecht at first doubted the correctness of the Basle decisions on the abolition of private ownership of land, but life provided convincing proof of their correctness. In March he spoke in a number of towns on the agrarian question, and unconditionally supported the Basle resolution. In June 1870 he spoke at the Party's Stuttgart Congress on the political stand of Social-Democracy. Discussion on this question was of great practical importance because the Reichstag elections were to be held in August and it was essential that the Party's attitude towards them should be determined. Liebknecht was, in principle, in favour of taking part in the elections with the aim of making use of them for propaganda purposes, but rejected any electoral agreements with bourgeois parties.

On the 19th of July, 1870, France declared war on Prussia, and this same day there was a session of the Reichstag at which the question of assigning 120 million thalers for military purposes was debated. When the vote was taken only two deputies, Wilhelm Liebknecht and August Bebel, to the accompaniment of angry shouts and hisses from the "patriotic" deputies, voted against military credits to the Prussian government. Their courageous action caused a sensation in Germany. At the end of November the government

again asked for funds and once again Liebknecht and Bebel voted against. Naturally, Bismarck's reactionary government could not forgive such conduct on the part of the Left-wing deputies. For opposition to the annexation of Alsace and Eastern Lorraine they were brought before a court on a charge of "high treason". Simultaneously an action was brought against Liebknecht for insulting "His Majesty". The proceedings in this case which aroused enormous interest opened on the 11th of March, 1872, in the district court in Leipzig and lasted fourteen days. The whole German press, plentifully represented in the courtroom, devoted a great deal of space to the proceedings.

However, the attempt to pass a verdict of guilty against socialism and the revolutionary working-class movement in the persons of the accused, and to deprive the German Workers' Party of its leaders ended in failure. Bebel and Liebknecht turned the courtroom into a tribune for revolutionary proletarian propaganda. They used the two-week-long court proceedings to expound the principles of socialist world outlook and revolutionary policy. By a majority of eight to four the court found Liebknecht and Bebel guilty of preparations for "high treason" and sentenced them to two years' confinement in a fortress.

The courageous conduct of Bebel and Liebknecht in court greatly enhanced their prestige as outstanding fighters for socialism and democracy far beyond the borders of Germany. Liebknecht's relatives and friends visited him regularly in pri-

son, and used every legal, and sometimes even illegal, means of keeping him informed of the state of the working-class movement. Not a single question of principle facing the Party at that time passed him by. From prison he corresponded with Marx and Engels.

Lieb knecht was still in prison when new general elections to the Reichstag took place in January 1874, in which the Social-Democrats gained six seats. Lieb knecht was elected in his own constituency of Tolleberg-Schneeberg in the first round. He was released on the 15th of April, and for the first time after his two-year break he took part in the regular congress of the Party in Coburg in July 1874. He wrote to Engels on the 27th of July telling him that the congress had gone well and that the delegates had displayed greater ideological clarity and greater energy than ever before, and were in a real fighting mood.

In May 1875, at a congress in Gotha, the Lassalleans united with the Eisenach Party to form a single working-class party. It became known as the Socialist Workers' Party and after 1890 as the German Social-Democratic Party. As a result of the unification, the split in the German working-class movement was overcome. The working people now had a party that could show the direction and goal of the struggle against the Junker-bourgeois exploiter system and against Prussian militarism.

Nevertheless, the programme adopted at the Gotha Congress was on the whole eclectic, and did not reflect the level already attained by the

working-class movement. The compromise with the Lassallean, petty-bourgeois and opportunist views could not but have affected the new party. It was precisely for this reason that Marx and Engels, while acknowledging the unification as a major success, clearly saw its darker sides, took the necessary steps to consolidate this union. Agreeing to this unification, Liebknecht and Bebel hoped to free the working people from the influence of Lassalleanism, and to a great extent they succeeded.

In its practical activities the German Social-Democratic Party pursued a revolutionary policy and helped to spread Marx's ideas among the working masses, achieving good results. In the 1877 Reichstag elections the Party obtained approximately half a million votes. This aroused fear in the government camp and in 1878, in an attempt to cut short the spread of socialist ideas in the country, the government passed an Exceptional Law Against Socialists.

This law represented a whole system of political, administrative, criminal, judicial and other measures of a state-police character designed to eradicate socialist ideas in the working-class movement and destroy the Social-Democratic Party. Three hundred and thirty-two central and local Social-Democratic organisations were disbanded and outlawed. The government of Wilhelm I banned many trade unions, hospital funds and workers' associations; meetings were cancelled, books, pamphlets and leaflets confiscated. Particularly severe punishments were awarded in

towns and districts where, in the opinion of police, there was a "threat to public safety or order", and in these a "minor state of siege" was introduced.

The Anti-Socialist Law was in force for twelve bitter years in Germany. Lenin called these years the heroic period of the German working-class movement. The Party skilfully combined legal and illegal methods of struggle, speeches were made in and out of parliament, ties with the masses were strengthened and large-scale educational work was carried on among them. In 1879 a new, illegal newspaper, the *Social-Demokrat* was founded in place of the banned *Vorwärts*. It was published first in Zurich and then in London. Many workers, ignoring danger, helped to distribute it in Germany.

In August 1880, the first Party congress since the introduction of the Anti-Socialist Law took place in Switzerland, not far from Zurich, in conditions of utmost secrecy. Its convocation was announced in the *Social-Demokrat*, but the time and place were not given and so Bismarck's police, running round in circles only learned where it had been held after it had finished its work. Liebknecht reported to the congress on the activities of the Social-Democrats in the Reichstag. The Reichstag faction of the Party was acknowledged to be the highest representative of Social-Democracy and the *Social-Demokrat* its sole official organ. Soon after the congress Liebknecht went to London where he informed Marx and Engels of the state of affairs in the Party and

in the editorial board of the paper, whose publications were subjected to serious criticism by the founders of scientific communism. After returning from London in November 1880, Liebknecht was sentenced to six months' imprisonment for one of his speeches.

Soon after Liebknecht's release the government of Saxony, under pressure "from above", declared Leipzig and its environs to be under a "minor state of siege" and ordered 33 Social-Democrats, including Liebknecht, to leave the city within twenty-four hours. Liebknecht moved to Borsdorf and lived there under police surveillance until the Anti-Socialist Law was repealed. In spite of frequent imprisonment for periods of a few weeks or months on the most varied pretexts, he continued to work actively on spreading socialist ideas and enhancing the influence of the Party.

Regular elections to the Reichstag took place in October 1881, and Liebknecht stood simultaneously in 17 constituencies. In spite of all sorts of persecution, these elections brought the Social-Democrats overwhelming victory, the Party gaining more than 300,000 votes.

Because of the Party's difficult financial situation Liebknecht decided to make a propaganda trip to America, and to collect funds for the German Social-Democrats. He went there in September 1886, visiting New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Detroit, Chicago, Pittsburgh, Washington and a number of other cities. He lectured and spoke on the working-class movement and social-

ist theory. Everywhere he met with success surpassing his most optimistic expectations: he collected 16,000 Marks—more than half the total election funds of the German Social-Democratic Party. Liebknecht published his impressions of America in a volume of travel essays, *A Glimpse of the New World*. The book was well written and contained many interesting observations.

Throughout all these years, overcoming many difficulties, Liebknecht continued his literary activity. Along with a large number of newspaper articles and proclamations he published several major works, among them several instalments of “A History of the French Revolution”. His superlative pamphlet, *The Spider and the Fly* was particularly successful and was translated into many languages.

The active propagation of socialist ideas and exposure of the exploitative nature of the bourgeois system, combined with a great deal of organisational work of the Social-Democratic leaders brought excellent results. The Party driven underground and for twelve years persecuted by the bourgeois-landowner state with exceptional brutality, nevertheless gained an increasing number of seats at elections and its popularity among the working class grew steadily.

One and a half million electors voted for the Social-Democrats. The bourgeoisie came to the conclusion that such measures as the Exceptional Law could not get the better of the working-class movement and so, in 1890 the Reichstag refused to prolong it.



In October 1890, for the first time after the collapse of the Anti-Socialist Law, a legal congress of the Socialist Workers' Party was held in Halle, and Liebknecht, as the senior Social-Democratic deputy in the Reichstag, opened it. Over four hundred delegates from all parts of the country attended. In addition, guests from a number of other European countries were present. New Party Rules, which took account of the changed conditions, were adopted at this congress. Basically, they corresponded to the principles of democratic centralism. The *Berliner Volksblatt* became the official organ of the Party, and from January 1, 1891, was called *Vorwärts. Berliner Volksblatt*. The congress appointed Liebknecht editor-in-chief, a post he filled until his death.

In August 1891, Liebknecht took part in the Brussels Congress of the Second International, at which he spoke on the attitude of the working class to militarism. He proclaimed proletarian internationalism to be an integral part of the socialist movement, emphasising that the enemy of the worker is not the worker in another country but his own bourgeoisie. The Brussels Congress was crowned with success for the Marxists who gained an impressive victory over the reformist and anarchist trends.

In 1895 V. I. Lenin, who had been in Switzerland, France and Germany and established contacts with Plekhanov's Emancipation of Labour group made long stop in Berlin where he called on Liebknecht.

A festive celebration was held in Berlin in

1896 in honour of Liebknecht's 70th birthday. Not just the German workers, but the whole international proletariat celebrated his jubilee, as also did the socialist press in many countries.

In the last years of his life Liebknecht fought against the opportunist actions of a number of Social-Democratic leaders. He was particularly critical of Bernstein's "theoretical researches". He fought for Marxism in alliance with the finest forces of the German revolutionary working-class movement, together with August Bebel, Paul Singer, Clara Zetkin and Rosa Luxemburg. The minutes of the Party congress, held in Stuttgart in 1898, record a storm of approving applause when Liebknecht, at the end of his speech, spoke out against Bernstein's slogan, "The movement is everything, the final goal—nothing", and acknowledged the aim of the social-democratic movement to be the overthrow of capitalist society.

A resolution adopted at the Party congress in Hannover, the last that Liebknecht was able to attend, said that the entire development of bourgeois society had so far given the Party no cause to abandon its basic conclusions about that society or to alter them, and that the Party believed, as it always had been, in the class struggle and considered the emancipation of the working class to be a matter of its own concern, and the seizure of political power to be the historic task of the working class.

In August 1899, Liebknecht addressed the

members of the Social-Democratic Party in his pamphlet, "No Compromises, No Electoral Agreements".

In this work, which became Liebknecht's political testament, he warned the Party of the dangers inherent in any departure from the tactics of the class struggle. He called on them to maintain and preserve the pure class character of the socialist party as the party of the working class; to promote the victorious emancipatory struggle by means of propaganda, education and organisation; to fight systematically against the class state in whose hands was concentrated all the political and economic power of capitalism, and in this battle to make good use of the disagreements and conflicts arising between the various bourgeois parties.

Wilhelm Liebknecht continued to work hard and intensively to the very end of his days, taking an active part in political life. This leader of German Social-Democracy died on the 7th of August, 1900.

To his last breath he waged an unceasing struggle with the enemies of Marxism. His death left a gap in the ranks of the supporters of revolutionary world outlook. Liebknecht's consistent revolutionary attitude towards the capitalist social system, his constant speeches in defence of working-class interests and his active preaching of Marxism won him respect among workers throughout the world. He was deeply convinced of the eventual victory of the proletariat and the formation of a socialist society.

The struggle for the victory of the proletariat, to which Wilhelm Liebknecht devoted his whole life, was continued by his son Karl, who became a prominent figure in the German and international working-class movement, one of the founders of the Communist Party of Germany and a worthy successor to his father.



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**Ferdinand Lassalle**  
**1825–1864**

## **“THE ENEMY OF OUR ENEMIES”**

“The enemy of our enemies” that was what Marx called Ferdinand Lassalle. Lassalle was a prominent figure in the German working-class movement in the mid-19th century. He actively championed the formation of an organisationally independent workers’ party. This was his great historic service to the working-class movement. Describing Lassalle and his activity, Engels noted: “Lassalle was an extraordinarily talented and widely educated person, a man of great energy and almost unlimited flexibility of mind; he seemed to have been created specifically to play a political role in whatever circumstances he found himself. But he was neither the initiator of the German working-class movement, nor an original thinker.”<sup>1</sup>

Ferdinand Lassalle was born on the 11th of April, 1825 in Breslau. His father was a wealthy merchant and all his relatives were merchants, bankers or entrepreneurs, and his parents wanted their son to become a businessman, too. He was not a particularly diligent pupil at the high school

and quite often got poor marks. In order to avoid clashes with his father he was transferred to the Commercial Academy in Leipzig. However, the director of the Academy soon became convinced that Ferdinand would never make an efficient businessman, and this was true indeed. His passionate, gifted nature could never be reconciled to the prosaic life of a commercial office. He avidly read the German classics, was attracted by Heine and dreamed of becoming a poet himself. Meanwhile, his studies were going badly, there were frequent clashes with his teachers, and in the end he decided to leave Academy. He returned to Breslau, studied independently, took and passed the matriculation examination. After this he succeeded in entering university, initially the local one and two years later, in Berlin.

The noisy university life with its swift reactions to events, thrilled Lassalle. He tried to be everywhere, know about everything that was going on, to read a great deal and, naturally, to oppose everything outmoded and conservative. At a student rally in Breslau he made a passionate speech in defence of Feuerbach, against whom the whole of reactionary Germany was up in arms. This was the first speech for which Lassalle was tried by the university court.

After graduating from university he went to Paris where he got acquainted with Heine. The latter to the end of his life spoke of Lassalle with great enthusiasm and amazement. Heine was not the only one to admire Lassalle, many people forecast the most brilliant future for him.

After university Lassalle dreamed of a scholarly career. He even went to Berlin with the intention of taking up a post as lecturer in the university, but this idea was abandoned in 1844, when the opportunity to make his name famous occurred and he did not let it pass by. He became a lawyer and defended the Countess Hatzfeldt in a divorce suit. The essence of the case, which with time became overgrown with sentimental details, boils down to the fact that the countess, persecuted by her husband, made up her mind to have the marriage dissolved. Since this was done openly and quite boldly and in spite of the opinion of high society, the trials, which dragged on for nine years, caused a great deal of noise. However, no matter what vivid colours were used by the lawyer to paint the husband's coarseness and despotism, to matter how much he extolled the "poor, defenceless" countess, the whole thing was a storm in a tea-cup. The clamorous society case went on far from the main roads of Germany's development: true democrats were fighting for the democratic development of the country, not for the financial interests of the landowners and bourgeoisie. Above all they were fighting for the unification of the separate German states through revolution, sweeping the numerous German monarchs, headed by the Prussian king, onto the scrap heap of history.

But instead of applying his energies to rallying the revolutionary forces, Lassalle was giving scandalous performances in court, assuring everyone that he was doing almost the most important



thing that could be done for democracy. During the proceedings all the contradictory aspects of Lassalle's character were reflected as in a drop of water. He was energetic, resolute, spoke like a talented journalist and brilliant orator, but at the same time he was somewhat of a poseur, who was at the very pinnacle of happiness when enthusiastic ladies threw him flowers and kisses as the champion of "equal rights for women".

Lassalle's role in this divorce case aroused justifiable indignation not only in Marx and Engels, but also among the Dusseldorf workers. Incidentally, preoccupied as he was with the case, Lassalle, nevertheless, did not remain indifferent to the revolution of 1848, which rocked all Germany. Dusseldorf, where he was living, shook with his calls to oppose the authorities and to refuse to pay taxes. In November 1848 he found himself in prison, under investigation on the monstrous, from the point of view of well-intentioned bourgeois, charge of "inciting the citizens to armed opposition to the royal authority". In his own defence Lassalle made a speech which even now is striking in its clear logic, its fascinating eloquence and its firm conviction of the rightness of his actions. Both Marx and Engels, seeing in his arrest an act of monarchical violence, came out in his defence in the pages of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*.

Lassalle's attraction to socialist ideas dates from the time of the revolution. He showed interest in socialist literature, carefully read the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* and began to correspond with

Marx and Engels. But neither contact with these two outstanding thinkers and revolutionaries, nor his reading of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* led to any radical change in his views. He did not become a supporter of the theory scientifically worked out by Marx and Engels. Lassalle remained a petty-bourgeois democrat in whose world outlook various theories and opinions were mixed in the most fantastic way, beginning with individual propositions from the *Manifesto* and ending with Proudhon's call for the creation of production associations.

As a philosopher he remained a supporter of Hegel's idealistic teaching. He explained the historical process as "the inner development of self-consciousness" and "self-development of Spirit". This "Spirit" leads the "development of the human race towards freedom". Lassalle puts forward his views in *The System of Acquired Rights*. Speaking as an economist, he makes use of this conclusion to remove from its pedestal the idol of bourgeois economists—private ownership. But he does not oppose private ownership in general, only capitalist ownership. Lassalle follows Proudhon and asserts that socialism does not do away with ownership but, on the contrary, introduces ownership based on labour.

His lack of firm revolutionary convictions led Lassalle to political adventurism. In 1862 he captivated Garibaldi with a grandiose plan for an armed uprising. Italy's national hero was to land in Dalmatia in spring, stir up an insurrection and move towards Budapest. According to the con-

spirators, the appearance of Garibaldi's detachments would lead to a rising in Vienna, and meanwhile Lassalle would rouse the workers in Germany. Naturally, in the absence of a revolutionary situation such an undertaking was pure adventurism.

At the beginning of the 1860s, in conditions of an upsurge in the working-class movement, Lassalle undertook the work which has immortalised his name: he began to campaign for the political organisation of the German proletariat. Objectively, the creation of a political organisation was a very important matter as it would free the working-class movement from bourgeois influence. But at the same time Lassalle rejected the revolutionary struggle of the working class, advocated "peaceful", parliamentary methods, and thought that the universal franchise would deliver power into the hands of the workers, and help to create a "free people's state". In an open letter to Leipzig workers he recommended them to set up a general workers' union to campaign for universal franchise.

In the spring of 1862 he gave three public lectures in Berlin: "On the Philosophy of Fichte", "On the Essence of the Constitution" and "On the Particular Connection Between the Contemporary Historical Period and the Idea of the Workers' Estate". He published the last of these lectures as a pamphlet under the title *The Working Man's Programme*, which brought him wide renown. For the first time in many years, in Germany, in an atmosphere of liberal stagnancy, of

preaching the community of interests of the bourgeoisie and the working class, there now rang out words on the special historic tasks of the working class, which should act independently because its hour had come.

Both his speeches and the pamphlet contain calls for action, for vigorous political activity by the workers, and substantiated demands for an organised political struggle. *The Working Man's Programme* is the best of Lassalle's propaganda works. It gave the working-class movement an impetus, but the socialist idea turned out to have been pushed back. The concept of a "class" was replaced by Lassalle by the concept of an "estate". Instead of acknowledging the irreconcilability of the class interests of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat and the inevitability of the class struggle, he called on the workers to fight only for universal direct suffrage.

In February 1863 Lassalle received a letter from the preparatory committee of a congress of German workers in which he was told that his pamphlet had met with enormous sympathy among the workers. He replied to this letter with a small pamphlet entitled: "An Open Answer to the Central Committee for the Convocation of an All-German Congress in Leipzig." Lassalle's central idea was the organisation of the workers in their own, special, political party. He proposed that the workers' estate should become its own entrepreneur on the basis of setting up free production associations of workers with the help of state credits and under state control. He con-

sidered this to be the only way of liberating the workers from the yoke of the "iron law of wages".

This law is one of Lassalle's revelations. Drawing on Malthus' reactionary theory, Lassalle came to the conclusion that the average wage would never rise above the minimum essential to support life, and the continuation of the human race. His theoretically erroneous proposition led him to practically wrong conclusions on the hopelessness of an organised struggle of the working class with the bourgeoisie for their vital rights. Opposing Lassalle's "revelation", Marx said that this law "confuses the laws that regulate the general movement of wages, or the ratio between the working class—*i.e.*, the total labour-power—and the total social capital, with the laws that distribute the working population over the different spheres of production".<sup>2</sup> It was proved that the level of wages does not depend on the cost of food and clothing alone, essential for the maintenance of a worker's life, but also on the level of political and cultural development of the workers, on their revolutionary consciousness and good organisation, and on their ability to resist capitalists.

After the adoption in Erfurt in 1891 of the "Programme of the Social-Democratic Party of Germany", there was no further mention of the "iron law of wages" in the theoretical propositions of the German Workers' Party and the working-class movement.

Lassalle's ideas about the state were no less mistaken. He did not understand the class nature

of the bourgeois state, suggesting to the workers that the state was a great association of the poorest classes. He proposed that the workers should establish workers' factories with the help of state credits. According to Lassalle, workers' associations would gradually take the management of production into their own hands. The state as such, thanks to the introduction of the suffrage and the winning by the workers of a parliamentary majority would turn into a "workers' state".

For Lassalle the taking over of the state machine meant preserving intact the existing government apparatus insofar as the state itself would become a "people's" state. His prescription for this was universal, direct and equal suffrage, and to achieve this, in his opinion, it was necessary chiefly to appeal to the good sense of public opinion by exclusively peaceful and legal means. He thought that universal suffrage need not be directed against the monarchy, insofar as the latter had much more in common with the ordinary people than with the bourgeoisie.

At the beginning of the 1860s Lassalle devoted a great deal of time to the setting up of the General Association of German Workers. Because he had no intention of forming a revolutionary party, any worker could become a member simply by expressing his wish to join the association. Non-workers were required to agree with the principles and aims of the organisation and could be admitted only by the board. The association was organised on a basis of strict centralism, having at its head a board consisting

of twenty-four members, including the president, with representatives in the provinces. In May 1863, Lassalle was elected president for a period of five years. In theory the president's power was limited by the board, but its members lived in different towns, and it was difficult for them to meet so that in fact Lassalle became the sole leader. He attached extreme importance to party discipline: every member must unquestioningly obey the president. Contradictions between the idea of a broad workers' union and the narrowly-centralist organisation were not slow in making themselves felt once the association really began to develop.

It was not a large organisation; after three months it numbered only 900, and in order to attract more members Lassalle set out on a recruiting campaign. He spoke at workers' meetings, before audiences numbering thousands. His opponents organised obstructions, interrupted his speeches by whistling, and more than once things ended in brawls. But in spite of all this Lassalle's speeches in Leipzig, Frankfurt and Berlin were attended by unprecedented triumph and he began to assert that in a year he would succeed in drawing the whole German proletariat into the association.

The success of his recruiting campaign can to a great extent be attributed to Lassalle's personal qualities: he was a fine speaker, sensitively attuned to the mood of his audience, able, when necessary, to display anger or to draw tears. But this was not the main thing. The workers' reac-

tion to Lassalle's speeches at that time testified to the German proletariat's enormous striving for unification, for the political struggle for their interests. It is precisely in this that we find the main reasons for his triumphs, in spite of the moderation of his programme.

His mistaken interpretation of the essence of the bourgeois state logically led Lassalle to "flirtations" with the head of the Prussian government—Bismarck. Lassalle believed that the state could, without the will of its leaders, be brought into line with its "true role". Here, independently of subjective "goodwill", the objective betrayal by Ferdinand Lassalle of the revolutionary German working-class movement, revealed itself.

He entered into negotiations with Bismarck and strove to persuade him that the workers were inclined to see the crown as the natural bearer of the social dictatorship, calling on the monarchy to "transform from a monarchy of the privileged estates into a social and revolutionary monarchy". Well aware of Bismarck's friction with the liberal opposition in the Reichstag, Lassalle proposed making a deal: give us universal suffrage and the General Association of German Workers will fall on our common enemy, the bourgeoisie.

Bismarck, skilful politician and intriguer, the man who a few years later was to introduce the draconian Exceptional Law Against Socialists still considered it possible to win the working class over to his side in the conflict with the opposition or, at the very least, to gain their neutrality. For



this reason he was not mean with promises to change his policy, to introduce universal suffrage and to conclude an alliance with the people. Naturally, as soon as the conflict was settled Bismarck forgot all about his promises to Lassalle.

In May 1864 Lassalle set out once again on a recruiting campaign in the course of which he visited Leipzig, Solingen, Bremen, Cologne and Wermelskirchen. On the 22nd of May the anniversary of the founding of the General Association of German Workers was celebrated in Ronsdorf. The meeting with its president was marked by great enthusiasm. Lassalle made a speech devoted exclusively to the successes of the association. After his speech in Ronsdorf Lassalle went to Dusseldorf to appear before the court to answer a complaint against one of his speeches. The court sentenced him to one year's imprisonment, which on appeal was reduced to six months. His forthcoming imprisonment lay heavily on Lassalle and in a very depressed mood he thought about quitting politics and turning to science.

In the summer of 1864 he went to Switzerland for rest and medical treatment. Here he worked on his basic work, *Herr Bastiat-Schulze von Delitzsch, der ökonomische Julian, oder: Capital und Arbeit* ("Mr Bastiat-Schulze from Delitzsch, the Economic Julian, or: Capital and Labour"), directed against the economic theories of Schulze-Delitzsch, was actively spreading bourgeois economic views among the workers.

Schulze-Delitzsch, dubbed by the bourgeois press "a king in the social sphere", called on workers and craftsmen to practise economy and thrift. What for? For the building up of capital, an essential requirement and a true aid to man in production. According to Schulze, the growth of capital creates a big demand for labour and a rise in wages. The workers needed capital, which they could make by saving materials and funds, in order to set up independent industrial enterprises. Schulze's theory attracted many craftsmen and small independent manufacturers for whom his credit and raw-material "self-help" societies were some aid in their struggle against large-scale industry.

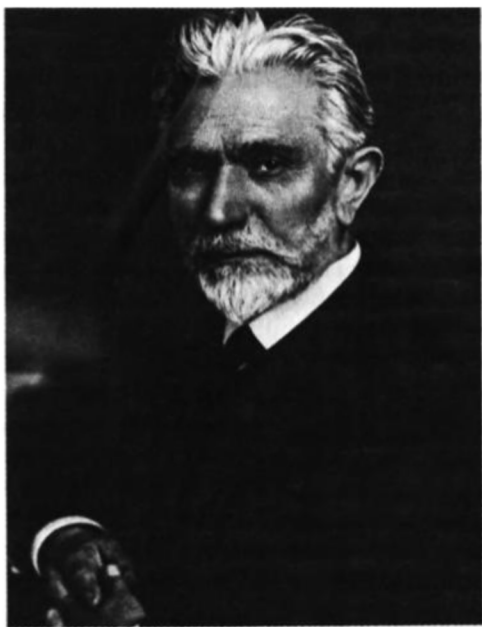
For Lassalle, with his conception of state assistance, and his loud accusations against capitalists of restricting "individual capital", such an approach was unacceptable, and he attacked Schulze with criticism, exposing his theory of "self-help" (advertising his own—state credit) and cowing the craftsmen with swift ruin. He did not criticise Schulze from the standpoint of Marxism, and was not armed with the dialectical method of cognition. Hence, the superficiality of his critique, although it is clothed in vivid phraseology. Moreover, both Lassalle and his opponent were supporters of bourgeois reformism, disagreeing only on the question of how it was to be done.

His work on the book against Schulze did not strengthen Lassalle's spirit. As he became increasingly convinced that he would not succeed in winning the broad mass of workers over to his side

he became more and more disappointed with political activity, and felt tired and dejected.

His end was tragic. In 1862 he had made the acquaintance of Helene von Dönniges, daughter of a Bavarian diplomat. During his stay in Switzerland they met again and the beautiful, charming Helene captivated Lassalle. But she was already engaged to a Rumanian magnate, Janko von Rakowitz. The upshot was a duel between Lassalle and Rakowitz on August 31, 1864, in which Lassalle was killed.

His unexpected death was a blow to many in Germany, not only to his working-class supporters but his opponents too. "You can imagine how struck I was by this news," Engels wrote to Marx on the 4th of September, 1864. "Whatever Lassalle may have been as a person, as a man of letters and a scholar, with respect to politics he was, undoubtedly, one of the most important figures in Germany. For us in the present he was a very unreliable friend, in the future—quite certainly an enemy, but all the same it is hard when one sees how Germany destroys all more or less efficient people in the extreme party. What rejoicing there will be among the manufacturers and progressivist dogs, for Lassalle was the only man they feared in Germany itself." <sup>3</sup>



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**August Bebel**  
**1840 - 1913**

## **THAT IS WHAT WE SHOULD DREAM OF!**

In 1901, working out the programme for setting up the party, Lenin wrote in his "What Is to Be Done?": "On the ladders and scaffolding of this general organisational structure there would soon develop and come to the fore Social-Democratic Zhelyabovs from among our revolutionaries and Russian Bebels from among our workers, who would take their place at the head of the mobilised army and rouse the whole people to settle accounts with the shame and the curse of Russia. That is what we should dream of!"<sup>1</sup>

Ferdinand August Bebel was born on the 22nd of February, 1840, in a suburb of Cologne. His earliest memories were of a gloomy room, which served as bedroom and dining room, drawing room, kitchen and storeroom. His father served as an NCO in the Prussian army. Pay was miserly and the shop which his mother kept for the soldiers of the garrison brought no income. Need and a half-starved existence were August's constant companions for many years.

His father died in the summer of 1844, and the family found itself in a catastrophic situation. The mother, with three little children and no means of subsistence was obliged to leave the garrison quarters. Their father's brother married the widow, became a father to the orphaned children and saved the family from perishing. He worked in Brauweiler as a warder in the prison and reformatory. Here the young August witnessed the severe regime which he recalled with a shudder in his declining years. The only joy in his life was the short hours spent in the village school.

August, the eldest child, was only six when the stepfather died. The comparative prosperity which the Bebel family was just about to find again now left them for ever. August's mother, to save them from destitution, moved back to her birthplace, the small town of Wetzlar. Poverty and work beyond her strength undermined her health and she died in 1853. A well-to-do aunt, their mother's sister, owner of a watermill, took the children to live with her. August attended school and in his spare time worked in the mill. In his reminiscences he wrote that he was considered one of the best pupils. The teacher paid special attention to him and two other boys and taught them arithmetic, geometry and even higher mathematics. After leaving school at the age of fourteen, he was apprenticed to a master turner. The working day lasted fourteen hours. Thus Bebel had personal experience of all those hardships that fell to the lot of the workers in Germany.

Even so he managed to steal time for reading in the evenings.

At the age of eighteen he became a journeyman and began his independent life. He set out to travel the country in search of work and in the course of a little over two years he covered the whole of South Germany and Austria before he finally settled in Leipzig in 1860, where he found work as a journeyman turner. His life was to be associated for many years with Leipzig, one of Germany's largest industrial and cultural centres. Here he found steady work, and joined one of the associations in the polytechnical society.

The society was of a liberal-moderate character, and could not promote the development of Bebel's socialist world outlook. Nevertheless, acquaintance with literature, with the English and French languages, which were taught to members of the society, were useful for broadening the horizons of the future leader of the German proletariat. During these years Bebel displayed an interest in the working-class and socialist movement.

Lassalle's pamphlet "An Open Answer to the Central Committee for the Convocation of an All-German Congress in Leipzig" was published in March 1863. Lassalle called on the German workers to set up an organisation, to isolate themselves politically from the bourgeoisie and to join the struggle for universal, equal, direct and secret suffrage. At the beginning of 1864 a group from the Workers' Educational Association in Leipzig went over to Lassalle, and Bebel was one of them. In spite of the fact that Bebel's world

outlook was still close to that of the petty-bourgeois democrats, he was even then doubtful of many of Lassalle's ideas. Subsequently, when Bebel had become a socialist, he opposed all attempts by Lassalle and his followers to subordinate the vital interests of the workers to those of the bourgeoisie.

In the first half of the 1860s there was a wave of large-scale strikes in Germany. Bebel attentively followed events, pondered on what in fact the programmes proclaimed by liberals from the Workers's Educational Association or supporters of Lassalle would give the workers. A sincere desire to help the oppressed proletariat, a profound knowledge of life, not acquired from books but from life itself, acquaintance with socialist literature, including Marx's works, led to a drastic change in Bebel's views. He rid himself of liberal-bourgeois views and joined the socialist camp. Wilhelm Liebknecht, with whom Bebel had become acquainted in 1865, played a positive part in this change. It was then that their joint activity in the working-class movement began. Liebknecht was much older, politically more experienced and better educated than Bebel. He had taken part in the revolution of 1848 and spent long years of exile in England.

In February 1867 August Bebel, leader of the united workers' associations of Saxony, was elected a deputy to the Reichstag of the North German Confederation. In April he attended a session in Berlin which discussed the draft constitution of the North German Confederation.



From the tribune of the Reichstag and in speeches to the workers Bebel exposed the anti-people state structure of the new Prusso-Germany.

In October 1867 Bebel spoke in the Reichstag against the draft law on conscription, trying to prove the necessity of reducing the term of service. He also took part in the work of the commission formed to draft the new regulations on industry, spoke in the Reichstag defending the right of the courts to examine questions of the abrogation of labour contracts and opposed child labour in factories.

Bebel did not receive a penny for his parliamentary and social work. Just as he had always done to earn the daily bread for himself and his family, he spent long hours working at his lathe. His family's condition was even worse when he was away on a propaganda trip that might last several weeks. His trips to Berlin and his attendance of Reichstag sessions also cost him dear. The ruling classes deliberately prevented the adoption of a law providing for the payment of subsistence money to deputies, in order to block the way to the Reichstag for elected workers. And the poor Saxon weavers could not give their deputy any financial assistance.

And still none of this could stop Bebel and his associates. In 1868 thanks to the energetic actions of August Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht, and in spite of the opposition of bourgeois delegates, a decision to adopt the programme of the First International was taken at the Congress of the

Workers' Associations in Nuremberg. After this Bebel became increasingly convinced of the necessity to establish a proletarian party that could consciously organise the class struggle in all its forms. Together with Liebknecht he devoted much effort to the organisation of an independent trade-union movement. He wrote that the historic importance of the trade unions lay in the fact that in them the workers acquire class consciousness and learn how to conduct the struggle against the power of capital.

In connection with the revolutionary ferment and crisis in monarchical Spain, in 1868 Bebel and Liebknecht addressed an appeal "To the Spanish People" calling for the establishment of a social-democratic republic. For this the government of Saxony sentenced each of them to three weeks' imprisonment. This was the beginning of Bebel's travels through the prisons of the Prusso-German monarchy.

Bebel devoted a great deal of effort to winning over to his side those workers who were members of Lassalle's General Association of German Workers. In 1869 the finest forces in Lassalle's association spoke out in support of Bebel and Liebknecht for the formation of a single workers' party. The Social-Democratic Workers' Party was founded in August 1869 at a constituent congress in Eisenach. Bebel and Liebknecht were entrusted with drawing up a programme and Rules of the Party, which were, with minor changes, adopted by the congress. The programme was based on the teachings of Marx and Engels. It regarded

private ownership of the means of production as the basis of all forms of slavery, called for destroying the ownership inherent in capitalist mode of production and abolition of all forms of class domination. The aim of the Party was proclaimed to be the winning of political power by the workers.

The first congress of the young party took place in Stuttgart in 1870. Bebel had to overcome considerable opposition to ensure the adoption of the decision taken by the First International at its congress in Basle (1869) on the attitude of the socialists to the agrarian question. Bebel proposed a resolution which was adopted by the congress; it insisted on making the land public property so that the state could rent it to agricultural co-operative associations which would cultivate it by scientific methods, and distribute the whole product of their labour among their members.

From 1867 to 1871 there were only two socialists in the North-German Reichstag who followed the Marxist line—Bebel and Liebknecht. In this period Bebel developed into a worker parliamentarian. He transformed the Reichstag rostrum into a platform for disseminating the ideas of socialism. Both Bebel and Liebknecht opposed Bismarck's policy and spoke out firmly against war.

Liebknecht did not at once understand the true character of the Franco-Prussian war, but Bebel managed to convince him that they should abstain from voting when war funds were being approved in the Reichstag. Bebel wrote a special

statement to be read out in the Reichstag and Liebknecht also signed it.

In November 1870, when further funds for the conduct of the war were being debated, Bebel accused the government and the ruling classes of waging not a defensive war, but a war of conquest, not a war for German independence but a war to enslave the French nation. He strongly condemned the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine, and demanded that war funds be refused.

He declared in the Reichstag that the wars of the last ten years had all been directed against the interests of the people, who would understand all this, and there could be only one result—destruction of the monarchy and the establishment of a republic. The internationalist stand of the German working class during the Franco-Prussian war is a glorious page in its history, and no small credit for this goes to Bebel and Liebknecht.

In December 1870 Bebel was arrested and placed in solitary confinement in Leipzig prison. But in March the authorities were obliged to release him as he had been elected to the All-German parliament, the Reichstag. This time he was the only Social-Democrat in the Reichstag as Liebknecht and the Lassalleans had been defeated at the polls. This made the burden that lay on Bebel's shoulders even heavier, but also more honourable. The only deputy from the Social-Democratic Party had to defend the cause of the Paris Commune. This was not easy, inasmuch as the whole German bourgeoisie was up in

arms against the Communards, pouring out floods of lies about them.

In 1872 Bebel and Liebknecht were arrested for their revolutionary activities during the war. They were tried in Leipzig on a charge of "treasonable intentions". Thanks to their speeches the proceedings in fact promoted the spread of socialist ideas and the enhancement of the Party's prestige among the workers. They were both sentenced to two years' imprisonment, and Bebel was given an extra nine months for having insulted the king in one of his speeches.

Subsequently Bebel often said, not without irony, that prolonged imprisonment has saved his life because it had helped him to restore his health, which had been finally ruined by the hectic activities of a deputy. Whenever he was in prison and his friends condoled with him he would answer jokingly that he needed a rest anyway.

Bebel tried to use his years in prison to complete his education. Previously party work had left him little time for serious study, but here in prison he could devote himself entirely to his books. In this connection, there is an interesting letter which Bebel sent to Karl Liebknecht, who was only just beginning his political activities and was also in prison. In his letter Bebel advised him to use his time in prison for self-education.

While in prison Bebel studied the first volume of Marx's *Capital*, and other works on political economy and history: *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* and *The Civil War in France* by Marx, *The Condition of the Working-Class in Eng-*

land by Engels, the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* and other works by the founders of scientific communism. He read books on philosophy, economics and natural science. It was also there that he wrote one of the first popular books for the workers *The Peasant War in Germany*. Unlike the Lassalleans, who regarded peasant wars as reactionary, Bebel emphasised the revolutionary traditions of the German toiler. In addition, he collected material for his book *Woman and Socialism* and translated the works of French scholars on Christianity.

In the introduction to *The Peasant War in Germany* and the foreword to *Charles Fourier. His Life and Theories* Bebel set out his materialist view of history. He expressed original opinions on the law-governed historical process, and came to the conclusion that a revolutionary transformation of society was inevitable.

His book *Woman in the Past, Present and Future*, or, *Woman and Socialism* appeared in 1879 and brought him worldwide fame as an author. It was published illegally in Germany but even there, where the Anti-Socialist Law was still in force, over fifteen thousand copies were distributed. For a long time *Woman and Socialism* was the most widely-read political-theoretical book among German Social-Democrats, and went through numerous editions in foreign languages. It is still a valuable manual in the field of scientific communism.

Its content demonstrates that Bebel had thoroughly assimilated Marxism and applied it

creatively in a new field. He stigmatised the centuries-old oppression of women and, using the method of historical materialism, revealed the social and political roots of this oppression. Drawing on the works of Marx and Engels and generalising the wealth of factual material, Bebel described the position of women throughout the whole course of history in organic connection with social relations. The book did a great deal for the actual equality of women. Bebel mercilessly exposed the hypocrisy of bourgeois morals, and showed that prostitution is a product of capitalism, that the sale of the female body can only exist in a bourgeois society, based as it is, on sale and purchase. The bourgeoisie regarded Bebel as an advocate of dissolute "free love", but in actual fact he was a man of integrity, boldly advocating free marriage, based on mutual attraction and love.

All in all Bebel spent about six years in prison, and it was in prison that he wrote his major, in the theoretical sense, and most important works—books which testify to the fact that the former turner was not only a man of action but also a theoretician capable of formulating and solving complicated problems of the revolutionary movement.

The foundation of the Social-Democratic Party in 1870 by no means meant the end of the split in the German working-class movement. The opportunist principles of Lassalle and his followers were a considerable obstacle to the creation of a party that would be truly revolutionary, and that would really unite the workers' movement.

For this reason Bebel paid a great deal of attention to their exposure.

In 1875, while Bebel was in prison, Liebknecht arranged about a union with the leaders of the Lassalleans, but in doing so made some gross mistakes: when preparing the draft programme he agreed to include a number of Lassallean dogmas. Marx and Engels sharply criticised this opportunist draft. When he got the draft Bebel expressed strong opposition to it and tried to write another one. However, after his release from prison he yielded to pressure from Liebknecht and other party activists and for tactical reasons did not oppose the adoption of the Gotha programme. Bebel knew nothing of Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, which was deliberately concealed from him and from the whole party.

The Gotha programme contradicted many important propositions of scientific communism and the class struggle. The united party inherited a heavy burden of the ideological and political errors of Lassalleanism. All the same this unification was a step forward because it put an end to the split in the working-class movement, and ensured the hegemony of Marxism in the unified party.

In June 1877 Bebel was once more tried in Berlin for insulting attacks on Bismarck in his pamphlet *The Parliamentary Activity of the German Reichstag and the Landtags from 1874 to 1876*. He was sentenced to nine months' imprisonment which the court of appeal reduced to six



months. This time he served his sentence in the Plözensee prison in Berlin.

In October 1878 the Reichstag passed a law against socialists, known as the Exceptional or Anti-Socialist Law which banned the activities of all the Party organisations and socialist trade unions, the publication of all socialist books, press organs, and also all meetings, the setting up of unions having a socialist character and the collection of money for these purposes.

The Party found itself in a difficult position. Some of its leaders simply lost their heads. The Central Committee published a decision to dissolve the Party, but no efforts were made to form any clandestine organisations. Marx and Engels both criticised this opportunist decision. By their advice they helped Bebel and Liebknecht overcome the confusion and take their place at the head of the Party masses, who independently and on their own initiative had begun to form clandestine organisations. A network of underground organisations was gradually created and Bebel worked energetically to preserve and strengthen the Party and to expand its work in conditions of persecution and repression.

At the end of 1880 Bebel went to London where he met Marx and Engels for the first time, and became convinced of the correctness of their instructions not only on questions of programme and tactics, but also the current affairs of German Social-Democracy. In their turn the great leaders of the proletariat became convinced that in Bebel they had a loyal disciple and comrade-in-

arms. With the help of Marx and Engels arrangements were made for the further publication of the revolutionary party organ, *Social-Demokrat* in Zurich, which became the militant mouthpiece of the Party.

Subjected to constant police persecution, Bebel never for a moment lost his revolutionary optimism and his unshakeable faith in the victory of socialism. He rendered enormous service to the Party in organising its legal and illegal activities during the period the Exceptional Law was in force. He showed himself to be a clever conspirator, a superb organiser and a courageous fighter. "Bebel showed himself to be a real party leader,"<sup>2</sup> wrote Lenin. At a Party congress in Switzerland in 1880, at Bebel's proposal, the words in the programme saying that the Party would strive to achieve its aims by legal means were replaced by words to the effect that it would strive to achieve its aims by any means available to it.

Bebel played an outstanding role in working out parliamentary tactics of international revolutionary Social-Democracy, and in the use of these tactics which never once let slip the slightest opportunity of gaining even an insignificant improvement for the workers, while remaining uncompromising in principle and always aiming at realising the ultimate goal.

Another great service rendered by Bebel was the participation of German Social-Democracy in the founding of the Second International in 1889.

The 1890 elections to the Reichstag showed

clearly that the use of the Anti-Socialist Law had not only not weakened but had actually strengthened and broadened the socialist ranks. Seeing the inability of this law to paralyse the working-class movement, the Reichstag, in October 1890, refused to prolong it. After its repeal Party membership grew noticeably, and the number of its representatives in the Reichstag also increased. In 1890 the Party was represented by 35 deputies, in 1898 by 56. Social-Democratic candidates received a quarter of all votes cast in the elections.

The first legal Party congress after the repeal of the law took place in Halle in October 1890, and was an expression of the growing solidarity of international socialism and the working-class movement.

But the Erfurt Congress, which was held in 1891, was particularly important in the development of the German Social-Democratic Party because at this congress the Marxist revolutionaries gained the victory over the opportunists within the Party. In a resolution adopted at the Erfurt Congress the Party demanded that its members should act firmly and decisively in the spirit of the Party programme, and, without neglecting the struggle for immediate demands, always have in mind the full and ultimate goal of the Party. Bebel's supporters at the congress defended the revolutionary tactic of using parliament in the interests of the class struggle of the workers.

Bebel and the Marxist majority at the congress

exposed the attempts by the reformists to dissolve the proletarian class party in the petty-bourgeois element. They repulsed the attacks on proletarian discipline within the Party, and on the principle of democratic centralism. The programme adopted at Erfurt consisted of a maximum and minimum programmes. The former set out the fundamental views of German Social-Democracy on bourgeois society and defined the final aim as the winning of political domination by the proletariat to destroy the capitalist system.

At the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, in conditions of an upsurge in the working-class movement, discussions began in the Party on the use of mass political strikes and on the role of the trade unions. In the course of the discussions three trends emerged: revisionist or right-opportunist; centrist, disguising its opportunism by revolutionary phraseology; and the left, whose representatives advocated the class struggle and actively opposed militarism and imperialist wars.

At the height of the fierce struggle of the German Social-Democratic Party against the revisionists Engels died in London. The death of his great friend and teacher was a heavy blow for August Bebel. Engels named him as one of the executors of his will with respect to his and Marx's literary legacy. Soon after Engels' death the German Social-Democrat E. Bernstein betrayed the fighting traditions of the Party and undertook a direct revision of Marxism, trying to turn the working-class organisation into a petty

bourgeois party of social reforms. Bebel strongly rebuffed this sortie and together with the other Marxists upheld the fundamental principles of revolutionary socialism.

The decisive blow was dealt to the revisionists at the Hannover Congress in October 1899 where the principles and tactics of the Party were discussed. Bebel's report, which was not only profound in content but also brilliant in form, lasted for six hours. Bebel's resolution, which declared that German Social-Democracy remained true to its own original programme and its own original tactics, was adopted by an absolute majority (216 to 31).

The Marxist position of Bebel and his supporters gained the active backing of the industrial working class and other strata of the working population. In the Reichstag elections on June 16, 1903, the Social-Democratic Party of Germany achieved an unprecedented success. Its candidates received over three million votes and won 81 seats.

The revisionists considered this remarkable success to be a manifestation of "capitalism's growing into socialism" and not the result of the class struggle of the proletariat, and demanded a radical revision of the Party's tactics. A discussion on the question "The Tactics of the Party" took place at the Party congress in September 1903. Bebel had the honour of opening the congress and he called upon the delegates to perform fearlessly a most radical operation: to cut open and remove the boils of revisionism which had long

since come to a head. He criticised the revisionists for being satisfied with minor concessions on the part of the ruling classes, for being afraid of the decisive actions of the masses and for concealing the class character of the state and its enmity towards the people. He upheld Marxist views and fought for the truly socialist character of the workers' party. To the end of his life Bebel remained the enemy of revisionism.

At the Amsterdam Congress of the Second International in 1904 Bebel, in a vivid speech, unmasked the revisionists who favoured fighting for the participation of socialists in bourgeois governments. He regarded them as traitors to the interests of the proletariat. However, as the leader of the Second International, who played an outstanding role in the international socialist movement, Bebel did not call for a break with the opportunists. This prevented him from realising that the exacerbation of the class struggle under imperialism created new conditions of struggle for the working class.

At the Party congress in Jena Bebel spoke of the necessity to prepare the masses for decisive revolutionary battles whose time was near. A congress resolution, adopted on his proposal, said that the congress considered the widest use of mass political strikes to be one of the most effective weapons in the struggle. However at the congress in Mannheim, Bebel, for the sake of peace in the Party, made considerable concessions to the opportunists and the trade union bosses. His resolution was adopted here but with amend-

ments by the trade union leaders which nullified the decision of the previous congress on mass political strikes.

The Russian revolution of 1905 exerted an enormous influence on Bebel, who understood its role in revolutionising the masses in Germany and other countries.

He was also greatly impressed by the underground work of the Russian revolutionaries. Two years after the revolution he said that in this revolution the Russian Social-Democrats had displayed such determination, such readiness for self-sacrifice, such selflessness that it could justly be described as amazing. As leader of the German Social-Democrats Bebel called on the international working class to display solidarity with the Russian revolutionaries and to help them.

On November 9, 1911, speaking in the Reichstag, Bebel mercilessly exposed the adventurist, aggressive policy of the German imperialists and its catastrophic consequences for the people. The emergency international socialist congress in Basle convened in 1912 in connection with the Balkan War was the last international congress attended by Bebel. He was ill and spoke only at the closing session of the congress. The assembly audience greeted him with thunderous, prolonged applause. His speech against the threat of a world war was short but expressive.

August Bebel celebrated his seventieth birthday on the 22nd of February, 1910. On this day the German proletariat and worker-socialists throughout the world paid their respect to this man who

had devoted his whole life to the struggle for the social liberation of the working class. Congratulations and messages of greeting came from all over the world. Answering them he wrote that he wanted to live to see the day when, carrying aloft a red banner, he would march ahead of the masses in the assault. But on August 13, 1913, in his 74th year, while getting ready for the congress in Jena, August Bebel died suddenly of a heart attack. In accordance with his will he was buried in Zurich. Memorial meetings were held in many towns in Germany and other countries and messages of condolence were sent to the headquarters of the German Social-Democratic Party by many socialist parties of Europe.

Lenin wrote at the time: "With the death of Bebel we lost not only the German Social-Democratic leader who had the greatest influence among the working class, and was most popular with the masses; in the course of his development and his political activity Bebel was the embodiment of a whole historical period in the life of international as well as German Social-Democracy." <sup>3</sup>





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**Tommaso Campanella**  
**1568 - 1639**

## **A BELL USHERING IN A NEW ERA**

It was a thing unheard of. In place of the wise teacher Florentino, a youth, Tommaso from San Giorgio, whom nobody knew had appeared at the disputation in Cosenza. His opponent, grown grey in debates, was amazed, even upset. Yet the Franciscan brothers gleefully rubbed their hands: do the intricate play of mind, the cunning moves and theological rhetoric really matter? The main thing was that the Dominican Order would be disgraced, for having dared to doubt their wisdom.

But alas, shameful defeat awaited the Franciscans. The seventeen-year-old Dominican poured a torrent of arguments over his opponent, freely quoting Holy Scripture, and finally proved him guilty of contradiction.

"Telesio's genius is revived in him!" someone exclaimed.

Bernardino Telesio (1509–1588) was an outstanding Italian scholar and philosopher. Tommaso Campanella became his follower. "I am a bell, heralding a new dawn!" he declared. (In Italian "campanella" means "bell".)

Tommaso Campanella was born in the small village of Stepiano in Calabria, on September 5, 1568, to the family of a poor shoemaker, and was christened Giovanni Domenico. He began learning at the age of five, and amazed everyone by his unusual memory and abilities. The legend has been preserved among his fellow-countrymen of how the poor boy, without money to pay for lessons, used to stand outside the open classroom window and whenever one of the pupils could not answer the teacher's question would himself ask: "May I answer?" And at fourteen, carried away by the eloquence of a preacher, a Dominican friar, attracted by stories of the scholarly traditions of the Dominican Order, of Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas, pillars of Catholic theology, he decided to enter a monastery, in those days the only path to learning for a poor boy. In honour of Thomas Aquinas he took the monastic name of Tommaso.

In the monastery he plunged into the study of theology and philosophy, studied such representatives of medieval scholastic philosophy as Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas, and the re-cast works of Aristotle. He devoured book after book, displaying an unprecedented thirst for knowledge, seeking answers to his questions and now beginning to have doubts about religious dogmas. Gradually he came to the conclusion that theology was mistaken, that between life, nature and scholasticism there was a wide abyss. He not only began to doubt religious dogmas but began to talk about his doubts, although still within a nar-

row circle. His teacher, who knew only too well that from doubt to the stake was just a short step, tried to turn his pupil onto the true path. He warned Campanella that if his views went against church dogmas then things would end badly.

Campanella was eighteen when he came into conflict with the teachers in the provincial monastery school. Against the young scholar were ranged the centuries-old tradition of the Dominican Order, the authority of the most prominent theologians and church councils, inert religious thinking. The teachers were indignant: Campanella dared to doubt the dogmas of the Holy Church, called for conclusions to be based on experience and sensation. Accusations of self-confidence and conceit poured over him. In his search for truth Campanella tried to find a philosopher who would construct his theory on the study of nature and not on quotations from religious authorities. He found such a philosopher in Bernardino Telesio, whose book *De rerum natura juxta propria principia*, he regarded as a true revelation. Telesio tried to prove that the cognition of nature should be based on experience, obtained as a result of the influence of the outside world on the sense organs. "The criterion of truth is experience," asserted Telesio. His conclusions confirmed Campanella's conjectures, and he was now more than ever convinced that the true authority is nature and not the doctrines of the theologians.

He was in complete agreement with Telesio's

views and became his faithful pupil. For this reason when he came across Giacomo Marta's book directed against Telesio, he was extremely indignant and decided to annihilate this treatise, all the more so because it abounded in contradictions and errors. His own book in defence of Telesio he called *Philosophia sensibus demonstrata* (A Philosophy based on Sensations). Marta had worked for seven years preparing his attack on Telesio; Campanella needed only seven months to smash this treatise to the ground, but in order to publish the book he had to go to Naples. The Prior of the monastery refused to let him go, so Campanella left the monastery and went to southern Italy. The rumour that he had sold his soul to the devil and was composing and spreading heresy, followed him there, and as a result the Inquisition became interested in him.

In Naples he went to the del Tufo family, who, in the opinion of his friends, held Telesio in high esteem. After reading Campanella's manuscript del Tufo said he would do everything possible to secure early publication.

It was here that he read Thomas More's *Utopia*, which made a great impression on him.

The publication, in 1591, of Campanella's book in defence of Telesio became an occasion for rejoicing for admirers of the latter. The church's reaction was quite different: Campanella was arrested and handed over to the Inquisition. During one of his interrogations he was asked: "Where did you get to know things you have never been taught?" He answered: "I have burnt

more oil studying than you have drunk wine in your whole life!"

He was kept for a whole year in the dark, damp vaults of the Inquisition, and it was only through the interference of influential friends that he was able to escape a severe sentence. In August 1592, he was given seven days to leave Naples and return to the monastery in his homeland. In addition, he was categorically ordered to adhere to the teachings of Thomas Aquinas and to condemn Telesio's views.

However, he ignored the sentence pronounced by the tribunal of the Dominican Order and, instead of returning to the monastery in his native Calabria, he set out to travel around Italy. From Naples he went to Rome and in September 1592 he was feasting his eyes on the sights of the "eternal city". From Rome he went to Florence where, thanks to letters of recommendation, he was favourably received by the Great Duke Ferdinand, but all the efforts of his friends to secure for him through the duke the right to teach in the university, were unsuccessful. The post of teacher of philosophy was given to Marta, against whom Campanella had written his first book. The loyalty of Marta turned out to be more preferable to the duke than the genius of Campanella.

On his way to Venice from Florence he stopped in Bologna. He was visited there by some Dominican friars who expressed positive opinions of his book and got talking on scientific topics. These "friendly" visits ended with Tommaso finding on his return from the town one day that all

his manuscripts were missing. He immediately guessed that this was the machinations of the Inquisition who were following his every step and had sent their agents to him specially for this. He fled to Padua where he reconstructed the stolen manuscript of his *Cosmologia* from memory.

At the beginning of 1593 he read Chiocco's book *Philosophical and Medical Studies*, in which he strongly criticised Telesio. Campanella, in spite of the ban, again took up his pen in defence of his teacher. His work *Apologia pro Telesio* (In Defence of Telesio), was a direct challenge to the churchmen, and in August 1593 he was arrested by the Inquisition in Padua. His friends made an attempt to free him. Everything was well thought out and organised, but at the very gates, when there was only one step to freedom, the night patrol appeared beside them and the prisoner was returned to his cell. This made things still more complicated. The heads of the holy Inquisition took up the matter and Campanella, put in irons, was despatched to Rome in January 1594.

In Rome he was placed in solitary confinement. The winter was severe, and it was icy cold in his cell. He was given food once a day. It was long since he had seen the sun. And even in these conditions he pondered intensely on the just arrangement of society and developed his idea of the future *City of the Sun*. While he was still free Campanella had learned that Giordano Bruno had been betrayed and arrested in Venice and the Inquisition in Rome was trying by every possible means to have him handed over to them. In

February 1593 the Venetian Republic delivered Bruno into the hands of the churchmen and so, when Campanella, in 1595, ran into an unknown prisoner in the prison yard, it was more by intuition than from the descriptions of his friends that he realised that this was Bruno.

The list of charges brought against Campanella was a long one. Why, instead of going to Calabria, where he should have gone in accordance with his sentence, had he gone to northern Italy under an assumed name? Why, instead of spreading the teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas, and condemning Telesio, had he done just the opposite? Why had he written a new book in defence of Telesio?

Possessing an inexhaustible fund of knowledge in all branches of science, plus outstanding erudition and logic, Campanella cleverly avoided the traps set for him, convincingly demonstrated the opposite idea of quotations from his works and not unsuccessfully presented himself in the role of a loyal subject of the holy church. He succeeded in leading the investigation into an impasse. Even torture did not help them. In the end, in the middle of 1595, the Inquisition transferred him to the Santa Sabina monastery, where he remained for another eighteen months. The tribunal pronounced sentence in December 1596.

One cold morning Campanella, dressed in shameful rags, was led to the church of Santa Maria della Minerva, made to kneel and pronounce the usual formula renouncing heresy, signed by the penitent. He was released, but not for long. Two



months later he was again seized by the Inquisition and thrown into jail: apparently some criminal in Naples, before his execution, had reported Campanella's heretical views. Once again investigations, interrogations, once again, on the table in front of the Inquisitors, there were manuscripts of the accused, clear evidence of his guilt. But the new investigation yielded no results and after ten months in prison he was released. True, all his works were banned, and he himself was obliged to return to his native place.

But Campanella did not hurry back to Calabria this time either. He wandered in the south of his long-suffering homeland, suffering under the yoke of the Spanish throne.

By this time the once-flourishing cities of Italy, famed for the skill of their craftsmen and their busy markets, had become pitiful backwaters. Great geographical discoveries had moved the trade routes westwards. The economic ruin of the south was crowned by the Spanish invasion, which brought with it feudalism, reaction, the sinister fires of the Inquisition, poverty and countless extortions.

Campanella saw all this in his wanderings, and the sufferings of the ordinary people did not leave him unmoved. In Calabria, where he returned after many months of wandering, he firmly decided to prepare an uprising against the Spanish domination. He dreamed of proclaiming Calabria a republic, free from both Spanish and native oppression. Calabria was to become a state of equal and free people, private ownership of

land and the means of production was to be replaced by public ownership.

The headquarters of the conspiracy was in the monastery of Santa Maria, in Stilo, where Campanella lived. Only the most reliable and devoted were initiated into the plans, but rumours of the proposed uprising had already spread beyond the walls of the monastery. The number of conspirators increased daily. Campanella managed to establish contact with the Italian commander of the Turkish fleet, Bassà Cicala, who promised not to permit reinforcements to reach the Spanish garrison, and even to make a landing.

It seemed as though everything had been thought out down to the smallest detail, every step foreseen, except for one thing—treachery. Several weeks before the start of the uprising the Spaniards received a denunciation. They took decisive measures and in a very short space of time the majority of the leaders were arrested. Campanella managed to hide and then fled to the mountains but was given out to the Spaniards by the owner of the house where he had found refuge. Once again arrest, investigation and confinement, this time not just for years but for decades. Campanella's father and his brother Giampietro were among those arrested.

All the threads of the conspiracy led to Campanella. He was its ideological inspirer and most active organiser. Many conspirators could not withstand the savage tortures and confessed to everything. Nevertheless, Campanella continued to deny having anything to do with the conspir-

acy and explained his flight as being an attempt to hide from personal enemies. He withstood the most refined Jesuit tortures and refused to confess to any of the charges brought against him. However, as a result of the numerous confessions of the other conspirators he found himself driven into a corner; his situation seemed hopeless; he was to be hanged and quartered. Then, on the 2nd of April, 1600, he began to feign madness. Numerous doctors examined him but failed to recognise the skilful game of the chief conspirator.

In order to expose his simulation Campanella was subjected to a most brutal torture called "velia". This inhuman torture lasted for thirty-six hours. Tommaso was hardly breathing but he did not utter a single betraying word. His endurance during this torture had a decisive influence on the proceedings and they began to consider him to be insane. Sentence could not be pronounced until sanity returned and the proceedings dragged on.

Campanella's health was undermined by the torture and he was unable to move. His strength was failing and he despaired of finishing his already planned book the *City of the Sun*. After all, it was precisely for the sake of this book, which should free mankind from oppression, that he had endured all the torture, done everything in order to survive and win. He asked for his rebel friends from the uprising to be moved into his cell, ostensibly so that they could at least give him something to drink, but hoping to be able to dictate his book to them. Instead, his father and brother were moved into his cell. But one

thought darkened the joy of seeing his relatives, both of them mere illiterate. Overcoming his pain he began to train himself to write. His father wondered why Tommaso, scarcely alive, tortured himself with work. How could he possibly have suspected that these pages, covered with uneven writing, were to make his son's name immortal?

The *City of the Sun* is Tommaso Campanella's most important work. It was written under the influence of More's *Utopia*, but is superior to it in many respects. It is a dialogue between two people: Captain, returned from a long voyage, and his Guest. Captain tells the Guest of his travels round the world, during which he found himself on a marvellous island in the Indian Ocean with a city of the Sun.

The city is situated on a mountain and is divided into seven belts or circles. In each belt there is perfect accommodation for living, for work and relaxation; there are also defence structures—ramparts and bastions.

The Captain goes on to tell of the system of government. The chief ruler among the inhabitants is the High Priest, who in their language is called Sun. He decides both temporal and spiritual problems. All disputes and matters eventually come to him for a decision. Three other rulers, enjoying equal rights, assist him. They are Power, Wisdom and Love. Power manages the matters of peace and war, he is also the military leader but has no power over Sun; the arts, construction, the sciences and all establishments and institutions pertaining to them are subordinate to Wis-

dom. Love is concerned with the continuation of the race. The upbringing of the newly-born is entrusted to him. Medicine, pharmaceutical matters as well as sowing, reaping and harvesting, in short, all agricultural matters and cattle raising are under his jurisdiction. He also manages all table and culinary affairs and, in general, everything pertaining to food and clothing, and those to whom the management of separate branches of these establishments is entrusted are subordinate to him.

The Great Council assembles at the time of the new moon and the full moon. Everyone over the age of twenty has access to it and the right to vote on matters of public concern; they may complain about the way the boss manages affairs or they may praise him. The government, that is, chiefly, Sun, Wisdom, Power and Love, meets every eight days. Each of them has three branches of management under his control. Other heads are chosen by these four highest. Incidentally, all, with the exception of the latter four, can be dismissed by the will of the people. The four highest rulers submit their resignation but only after previous consultation among themselves and, in any case, only when someone wiser, more suitable or more worthy is found.

It is important to note that the communist utopia *City of the Sun*, was not a fruit of theoretical ruminations by the learned man. Evidence given by participants in the Calabrian conspiracy shows that Campanella had quite definitely formulated his communist programme during the period of

preparing for the uprising against the Spanish domination. And both in his sermons to the people and especially in secret talks with his fellow conspirators he drew a picture of the future ideal republic where people would live as a commune. The revolution in Calabria was to be the beginning of a general transformation: from the mountain of Stilo, which Campanella called the mountain of abundance and freedom, runners would go out to the whole world, calling on all peoples to adopt the new law which was better than that of the Christians. Thus from the very beginning, Campanella's ideas took shape of a concrete political programme of social transformations and the goal of the conspiracy. He counterposed the ideal state to the existing orders.

Indignantly he wrote of the oppressors, wallowing in debauchery and idleness, engaged in usury and consumed with greed. He showed how idleness leads to the loss of human virtues, pointed out the hypocrisy of "noble" descent and "deceptive nobleness of birth". In place of this unjust, depraved society, Campanella offers a new one, based on socialist principles. Ownership lies at the heart of his ideas. In his ideal society there is no private ownership, the commune makes everyone both rich and poor at the same time; rich because they have everything, poor because they own nothing. In the Sun state public ownership is based on the work of all members of society. Everyone, no matter to what work he is assigned, does it as if it were the most honourable. With them work is an honourable and desirable thing.

In Campanella's society men and women are equal. Women study and work on a par with men, even going through military training so that in case of emergency they could participate in the defence of the city together with men. There is a four-hour working day. To Campanella it seemed possible to reduce the working day not only because everyone worked, but also by the introduction of all that was newest and latest in technology, thus making labour more productive.

In Campanella's dreams of socialism there is a great deal that is naive and erroneous. For instance, he proposed state regulation of conjugal relations, disregarding personal affections and interests, which, of course, cannot be in a truly socialist society. Astrological superstitions are recognised in the City of the Sun, as also are religion and a belief in the immortality of the soul.

At the same time the Sun state is a union of cheerful, patriotic people, liberated from the enslaving power of things; a union of people who combine physical and mental work, and harmoniously develop their physical and mental faculties, a union of people for whom work is not penal servitude and torment, but a pleasant, attractive and honourable activity. Campanella stresses the unity of work and enjoyment, speaks of work as an honourable occupation, as the combination of learning with productive labour.

In spite of certain shortcomings, which are particularly noticeable over three and a half centuries later, on the whole, in its conception and treatment of the chief problems of the organisation

and development of a society, Campanella's utopia is one of the most complete and boldest. With complete frankness he discusses and solves the social problems of his day, many of which still trouble mankind even today.

It was no accident that Campanella called his state the City of the Sun. He extolled the Sun, which rarely penetrated to the underground dungeons, as the King of Nature, the source of warmth, light and reason.

One of his other works, a treatise called *Atheismus Triumphatus* is very interesting. In it he puts the question: if God is infinitely good and omnipresent, whence is poured down on us such a multitude of misfortunes? Why doesn't God prevent famine, epidemics and wars? He went on to say that the world must be changed as it is based on unjust orders. Campanella considered religion to be nothing more than the deification by man of his own highest powers and capabilities. For the 16th century this standpoint was in essence anti-religious. Its further development led to the famous aphorism of Feuerbach, the 19th century materialist philosopher: "It was not God who created Man, but Man who created God." Campanella's ideas were interpreted by the clergy as a rejection of God and the church; this had some grounds insofar as the essence of his ideas was anti-religious and anti-clerical. He did not recognise Heaven and Hell, or miracles and church sacraments.

Meanwhile clouds were once more gathering over his head. In spite of the law forbidding the



trial of the insane, Roman justice decided to punish this rebel. From the point of view of the curia this was an absolute necessity: it would be a stern lesson for free-thinkers, severe punishment for Campanella, and for Rome—one more display of loyalty to the powerful Spaniards.

In January 1603 Campanella was sentenced to life imprisonment, without any hope of release. He was frequently moved from one prison to another for a variety of reasons and each time conditions were worse. But in whatever conditions he found himself Campanella continued to work.

It was just at that time that he learned about Galilei, and no matter how tragic his own fate was he hailed the teaching of this astronomical genius. In 1616, when the church declared the teaching of Copernicus “heretical” and forbade Galilei, who was a follower of the great Polish scientist, to develop it further, Campanella wrote a new treatise, *Apologia Galilaei*, in which, making skilful use of quotations from the Bible, he proved that Galilei’s teaching did not contradict Holy scriptures.

Years, decades passed and Campanella continued to languish in prison, but no matter how hard the Inquisition and the Spanish authorities tried to wipe out even the memory of his name they invariably failed. Thanks to his friend Tobia Adami his books began to appear abroad, in protestant Germany one after another. *Prodromus philosophiae instaurandae* (The Herald of a Restored Philosophy) as Adami called one of Cam-

panella's early works whose manuscript he had found, was published in 1617. In 1620 he published *De sensu rerum*, in 1622, *Apologia Galilaei*, and a collection of verse, and, finally, in 1623, *Philosophia epilogistica realis* was brought out in which the *City of the Sun* appeared for the first time.

Campanella dreamt of freedom. He wrote to the most influential and powerful people of the world, to Pope Paul V, the Emperor Rudolf II, King Philip III, to the Great Duke of Tuscany, to the Roman cardinals and the Austrian archdukes but all was in vain, and it was only on the 23rd of May, 1626, that, through the efforts of his friends, this famous prisoner, after twenty-seven years in prison, obtained his freedom. A mere coincidence played no small part in this. The Spanish Viceroy in Naples, the Duke of Alva, quarrelled with Tramalli, the Papal representative. Insofar as Campanella was not only the organiser of the Calabrian uprising against the Spanish occupation, but also the prisoner of the Inquisition, the agreement of the Holy Service was needed. But the Duke of Alva was tired of Tramalli poking his nose into other people's affairs and he gave the order for Campanella's release. Tommaso realised that in these circumstances the Inquisition would hate him even more and would not leave him in peace. For this reason he decided that as soon as he was free he would leave the city in secret.

However, this plan was not destined to be materialised. It turned out that he was to live

the monastery of San Dominico Maggiore, and immediately, when ordered by the Viceroy, must report to the prison of Castel Nuovo. He also learned that his freedom had been obtained against a bail of two thousand ducats which his friends had collected. Moreover the Spanish Viceroy demanded that people closest to Campanella should become his guarantors. He could break the Viceroy's conditions and wave goodbye to the security, but he could not let down those closest to him, and so he was forced to stay in Naples. The Inquisition was not slow to take advantage of this.

As soon as Campanella was released Tramalli sent an urgent report to Rome. The news caused alarm there: a dangerous heretic at liberty! The Pope ordered Campanella to be kept under constant surveillance, and at the first opportunity he was to be arrested and brought to Rome. After less than a month of freedom he was secretly seized by the Inquisition and delivered to their prison which was beyond the Viceroy's jurisdiction. The prisoner found himself in the gloomy, damp cellars of the handsome mansion in Piazza della Carito.

It was in this very place that Campanella had begun his prison wanderings thirty-five years earlier.

A stay in the dungeons of the Inquisition promised nothing good, but he did not lose hope of gaining freedom, and such an opportunity soon presented itself. Friction arose between Pope Urban VIII and the Spanish court. The Spaniards

began to spread abroad false forecasts by numerous astrologers of the early death of the Pope. The horoscopes even gave the date of the Pope's death as foretold by the disposition of the stars. The Pope was a hypochondriac and finally lost all peace of mind. Taking advantage of this, Campanella let it be known that he knew the secret of how to avoid the fate foretold by the stars.

The Pope soon got to know of this, showed interest in the fate of the famous prisoner and ordered Campanella to be brought to him. In their conversation Campanella not only did not refute the forecasts of the astrologers, but, on the contrary, added some observations, confirming the danger that was hanging over the Pope. At the same time he roused in the Pope the hope that he could avert the foretold fate, but for this he should be free and have everything he needed at his disposal. On the 27th of July, 1628, Urban VIII ordered Campanella's release. The thinker once again gained his freedom after fifty prison and thirty-three years' confinement.

But in return for his freedom he had to "save" the Pope from death. For quite understandable reasons the "saving" of the Pope was a matter of the utmost secrecy.

Urban VIII unquestioningly carried out everything his "saviour" ordered him to do: knee before the fireplace, sang, recited prayers, obediently repeated after Campanella the gibberish magic formulae. Yet for similar "pagan rites" the Holy Inquisition immediately consigned their per-

formers to the flames. Campanella deliberately conducted the whole procedure slowly. He enjoyed seeing how the Primate tried at any price to prolong his stay in "this world". Contrary to his own preachings, the Pope tried to change "the will of God" and put off his departure for "Heaven".

The Pope did not die in the fateful September, which only strengthened his faith in the powers and knowledge of the man, with whose help he had been able to avoid certain death. Urban VIII openly expressed his gratitude to his "saviour" and often invited him to come and talk. Campanella took advantage of this protection to have his manuscripts, confiscated and banned by the Inquisition, returned to him.

Campanella strove to make use of the Pope's protection in the interests of his beloved native country. During his thirty-three years in prison the idea of freeing his native Calabria had never left him. Through his favourite pupil Pignatelli he again began to prepare an uprising. Several influential people in Naples and other cities joined the conspiracy, but once again they were unlucky. One of the conspirators turned traitor. Pignatelli was arrested by the Spaniards, and Campanella had to leave his homeland. At the dead of night, under an assumed name, in the French ambassador's carriage, he left his beloved Italy for ever.

In France he was greeted with honours as a famous philosopher, a famous prisoner of the Inquisition and an opponent of Spain, the sworn enemy of France. He was even invited to the

Royal Council to give his view of the situation in Italy.

Campanella, to the end of his life living in France, as he himself said, "on charity and fame", continued to study and teach, and was just as insatiable of knowledge as always. He was entrusted by Richelieu with heading academic assemblies which formed the basis for the future Academie Française. In 1638, when he was seventy years old, he studied the works of Descartes with interest and tried to meet him personally.

Campanella died on the 21st of May, 1639, in the Monastery of St. Jacob, which one and a half centuries later became the political club of the Jacobins.

When he came out of prison he was an old man of sixty, but to the end of his life he firmly believed, like the heroes of his books, that the time would come when people would live according to the customs of the state created by his dream. Of course, there is a great deal that is naive in Campanella's book, but he was living and working in the days when the Inquisition burnt Giordano Bruno at the stake, and cruelly persecuted Galilei. In his letter to Ferdinand III, Duke of Tuscany, he wrote: "The ages to come will judge us, for the present age puts to death its own benefactors."

To his last breath Tommaso Campanella was "a bell, heralding a new era", an era of freedom and brotherhood. His remarkable works were a powerful weapon against tyranny and explo

tation, and together with others served as a source for the development by Marx and Engels of the theory of scientific communism.

Campanella was one of the outstanding founders of Utopian socialism. He expressed the age-old dream of the oppressed people of an ideal society, founded on the principles of universal equality, and the abolition of poverty and exploitation. He has the right to be numbered among those whose names are a banner in the struggle for a better, radiant life for mankind, for the realisation of the brightest visions of a social transformation. Campanella was a courageous revolutionary fighter, one of the most progressive men of his day.



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**Jean Mellier**  
**1664 - 1729**



## TESTAMENT

Etrépigny is a small village in Champagne. Modest little houses, drowning in greenery, fields cut up by boundary strips. A village like any other village, of which there are many in France. Even the village curé, Jean Mellier, in his threadbare black soutane, with the invariable breviary in his hands is in no way different from his colleagues, brought by the will of fate and the archbishop to these poor parishes of France. But how could the inhabitants of Etrépigny know that behind the appearance of the meek priest a man was hidden who believed neither in God nor the Devil? How could they even imagine that, seated at his desk, their good curé was creating works calling for the overthrow of the king, the church and the state? And not just the state, but even the holy of holies – private ownership!

Jean Mellier led what at first glance seemed a strange life. In the morning, in his black soutane, to the summoning chime of the bells, he would open the doors of the parish church. In the

evening, he would bend over the pages of his *Testament* and dream of a just society where there would be neither churches, priests, nor private ownership. So, what sort of a man was this free thinker and rebel, this humble village priest Jean Mellier?

The biographical details of Jean Mellier that have been preserved are extremely sparse. He was born on the 15th of June, 1664, in the village of Mazerny, one of the poorest regions of Champagne. His father, Gerard Mellier, and his mother, Symphorienne Braidy, were engaged in the cottage weaving industry, producing serge. At first Jean studied with the village priest and then in the theological school in Reims. After completing his studies he became a priest and at the beginning of 1689 he was given his own independent parish in Etrépigny, where he spent the rest of his life.

Mellier lived a solitary life in his parish, visiting only two neighbouring priests and his relatives. He was an educated man, well-versed in the ancient classics, used to read Plato, Pliny, Ovid, Virgil, Tacitus, Livius and Seneca, and he frequently quoted Lucretius, one of the authors he most respected. In his *Testament* he also referred to contemporary literature and social and political articles.

His parishioners loved Jean Mellier. He was kind, spent his income on charity, sympathised with the hard lot of the peasants, and was satisfied with very little for himself. He wrote in the *Testament* that he would always rather give the

receive, if he were allowed to follow the dictates of his heart.

He was well aware of the hard life of the French peasantry. But he saw in peasants not just humble, downtrodden people: Champagne, like many other French provinces, was more than once the scene of peasant uprisings. We should therefore look for the sources of Mellier's revolutionary ideas, most progressive ideas for that time, in the living conditions, the moods and aspirations of the broad masses of the French peasantry.

Mellier's personal life passed inconspicuously. Nevertheless there was one event which warrants the particular attention of his biographers and which opens up the inner world of this reserved man. In 1716 Mellier accused the local Seigneur de Touly of brutal treatment of the peasants and refused to mention him in his prayers. The cardinal of Reims, François de Mailly, rushed to deliver a reprimand to his refractory priest. But Mellier not only did not acknowledge his guilt, but spoke harshly about the whole "second estate", the whole high-born gentry. There followed a new reprimand, even more severe, with a demand that he renounce his "pernicious errors"

This was, perhaps, the first and last occasion on which Jean Mellier spoke out against the existing order. Nevertheless, in his conflict with de Touly, he showed himself to be by no means such a timid and weak-willed creature as might at first glance appear.

To the parishioners of Etrépigny their curé

might seem to lead a peaceful, happy life, but to him it was burdensome and sad. He was a non-believer and at the same time he was obliged to preach the greatness and divinity of the Catholic church; he was a supporter of communal property, hated despotism, the nobility and the clergy, yet he was forced, every Sunday, to pray for them and appeal to his parishioners for unquestioning submission to this order of things. But in doing so Mellier, in his own words, experienced a deep revulsion.

He had sufficient courage to break in his mind with all that was at that time regarded as sacred, but not sufficient to disclose this. He could not bring himself to suffer persecution for the sake of truth, and preferred throughout his life to suffer from the torments of divided feelings. But what he could not express while he was alive he decided to make known to his parishioners and the whole world after his death.

Biographers have not been able to establish the exact date of his death but a document has been found, signed by Mellier on the 27th of June, 1729, concerning the renunciation of his right to a chapel belonging to him. There is an inventory of the property of the late Jean Mellier, dated 7th July, and a record of the appointment of a new priest to Etrépigny, from which follows that he died between the 28th of June and the 6th of July, 1729.

After his death a manuscript containing 366 large pages and entitled *Testament* was discovered among his papers, reading as follows:

“...Dear friends, I could not during my lifetime say openly what I thought about the system and means of ruling people, of religions and morals, as this would have entailed very dangerous and regrettable consequences. Therefore I decided to tell you this after my death... My aim is to open your eyes, even if somewhat late, to those preposterous delusions among which all of us had the misfortune to be born and to live...”

Religion and the powers-that-be are two pick-pockets who jointly rob the people and in doing so get along famously with one another, says the author of the *Testament*. Religion supports even the most wicked government, and the government in its turn supports the most stupid and vile religion.

Neither could Mellier pass by in silence those abuses and oppressions which Christianity does not merely tolerate but actively encourages and approves. Most of all he was indignant at the inequality among people. Some seemed to have been born for the sole purpose of despotically dominating others and eternally enjoying all the good things in life, wrote Mellier, while others, on the contrary, to be poverty-stricken, miserable and despised slaves and to languish all their lives under the weight of indigence and back-breaking toil. Such inequality is profoundly unjust. All people are born equal, they all have an equal right to life, the right to natural freedom and their share of the good things of life, and they should all engage in useful labour.

Mellier therefore considered the existence of people who made no useful contribution to be unnatural, particularly the large army of churchmen. They do not produce good things of life, while being better provided than the rest with incomes and all the good things of life: they have the very best accommodation, furnishings, clothing, footwear and food. Everywhere they own large farms, bringing them large incomes without the least effort, and in addition they receive a rich tithe from the majority of parishes. In other words, having sown nothing they reap an abundant harvest.

Mellier opposed private ownership, which leads to a constant struggle between people and to domination by the most powerful. He argued that only with the help of the state as a system of coercion can the property owners keep the people obedient. The essence of state activity, according to him, is legalised robbery.

Such understanding of the essence of the state raises Mellier above his famous contemporaries, representatives of the 18th-century Enlightenment. Even though these latter allowed themselves to criticise the feudal state from a bourgeois standpoint, on the whole they never probed its essence. They regarded state power as a supra-class force, called upon to resolve, in the bourgeois way, of course, the contradictions in the existing society. In the conditions of the rule of absolutism and feudalism such criticism had a progressive character, was a step forward, but the fact of the matter is that it was only one step forward. The

author of the *Testament* looked deeper. For him any state founded on private ownership was an instrument of violence with regard to the workers. Such a conjecture in the first half of the 18th century was not just a new "tomorrow" in the history of man, but even a "day after tomorrow".

Mellier established a connection between crime and private ownership, that it is precisely the unjust distribution of good things of life that explains fraud, swindling, embezzlement, robbery, murder and all sorts of other crimes. He considered that evil comes from the fact that people appropriate as private possessions the fruits and riches of the earth, when in fact all should possess and enjoy them in common, and on equal terms. In his opinion society should consist of one family, a single communist community. People would then live in peace and their property should be socialised.

A number of sections of the *Testament* are devoted to the exposure of tyrannical government. The abuse which makes the majority of people miserable throughout life, asserts the author, is the almost universal tyranny of the powers-that-be—kings, tsars, princes, dukes—having unlimited power over people. Mellier's bold appeal to give short shrift to tyrants made a deep impression both on his contemporaries and on succeeding generations.

Even today the *Testament* is striking in its boldness and depth of thought. Jean Mellier who lived at the end of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th centuries, turned out, in his world out-

look to be not only more radical than his contemporaries, the philosophers of the Enlightenment, but the leaders of the great French Revolution also. In fact all of them, to a greater or lesser extent, supported the bourgeois social system and bourgeois property, which was to bring the "golden age". But Mellier opposed any kind of oppression and exploitation, including capitalist. Not only did he oppose them but saw clearly the source of all enslavement—private property. He was a communist and even if his teaching did have a utopian character it was not unfruitful, it helped to shake the foundations, first of the feudal and then of the capitalist systems.

In his criticism of religion Mellier, the priest, went further than his contemporaries. The only church the Enlighteners attacked was the one which defended the foundations of feudalism; the Jacobins overthrew Christianity and closed the churches, but then in place of all that had been before they introduced a new religion, the cult of higher reason. Jean Mellier, the country priest from Champagne, rejected all religions and all churches. He was an atheist. He was among the first to see that the church was nothing more than a means of securing the spiritual enslavement of the working people.

He had no illusions as to how the representatives of the ruling class would greet his work, and he was not mistaken. The churchmen and tyrants did all they could to wipe out all traces of this rebel's manuscript. All references to the author of the *Testament*, no matter where they might occur,



were categorically forbidden. Thus, one of the documents discovered in the Bastille archives shows that in 1741 a bookseller was accused of engaging in the dissemination of forbidden literature, and of having dealings with the authors of such literature, and of having sold the works of the priest from Etrépigny.

Nevertheless, a surprising fate awaited the *Testament*, and with it a second birth for the author. Mellier made three manuscript copies of his work. One was given for safe-keeping to the bailiff in Sainte Menechould, the other two were found among his papers after his death. One was addressed to his parishioners, the other to his lawyer, Pierre Leroux.

The authorities hastened to confiscate the manuscripts of the rebellious priest, but in spite of all their efforts one of the copies escaped their attention; escaped only to reappear in a large number of manuscript copies, and by the middle of the 18th century the *Testament* was well known to a wide circle of educated people in Paris and other European cities. In a letter of November 30, 1735, Voltaire wrote to Thieriot of the enjoyment with which he had been reading Locke's book, and he asked: "Who is this village priest you write me about? A French priest and a philosopher like Locke? Could you possibly send me the manuscript? I will return it by all means."<sup>1</sup> Voltaire read the manuscript in 1736. His attitude towards it was ambivalent. As a bourgeois he was horrified by Mellier's radicalism, but at the same time he could not fail to see that Mellier's work

had struck a severe blow at feudalism in France. "It is a very rare book, a treasure!", "It must be widely known." Such was Voltaire's flattering comment on the *Testament*.

Voltaire, with his characteristic resourcefulness, found a way out of his ambiguous position: Mellier must be published but only after a certain emendation (by Voltaire and the bourgeoisie).

Voltaire finished his *Extracts* from Mellier's *Testament* in March 1742; at first it was distributed in M.S. form and was published only in 1762. The *Extracts* was a means of spreading Mellier's ideas and also a means of supplanting the original work with a shorter and less rebellious version. Voltaire omitted Mellier's revolutionary and democratic ideas and left only the refutation of Christianity. But even in this shortened form Voltaire considered this brochure to be more rebellious than Jean-Jacque Rousseau's books. Having abridged the *Testament* and distorted its meaning, Voltaire persistently tried to spread his own *Extracts*. He advised every honest man to carry a copy of the amended version of the *Testament* in his pocket.

The ideas preached by the village priest were so much in keeping with the prevailing moods, and the intellectual charge received by the readers was so strong that even the chopped up version, attired, from Voltaire's point of view, in decorous dress, aroused enormous interest in pre-revolutionary France.

And no matter how much the royal power tried to root out from people's memories the name of

the rebellious author of the *Testament*, no matter how hard they tried to destroy the work itself, the revolutionary seeds sown by Mellier produced their shoots. Thus the well-known French materialist, La Mettrie, was a follower of Mellier and made use of the *Testament*. In 1747 in his book *L'Homme-machine*, he hinted that his principal teacher in philosophy was a certain French atheist. In spite of the ban, Mellier's manuscript had a wide circulation among educated people in the middle of the 18th century.

Attempting to prevent the spread of ideas such as those of the rebellious priest from Etrépigny the French government issued a decree in 1757, which forbade, on pain of death, the printing and distribution of works directed against religion, royal power or social order. However, such decrees, just like the fires of the Middle Ages in which not only progressive books were consumed but also their authors, did not achieve the desired results.

In Amsterdam in 1772, Holbach printed anonymously a book entitled *Bon sens du curé Meslier* (The Commonsense of Father Mellier). It is a remarkable anti-religious work, but it does not contain a single reference to the *Testament*, or a single extract from it, even Mellier's name is not mentioned. The author merely made use of the name to attract attention to his book. There is plenty of evidence to show that at this period this name was familiar to all educated people, in whose minds it was associated with a specific method of attack on religion and power. But, evi-

dently, dealing in such a book was very dangerous, for in that same year a new edition was published with the neutral title of *Commonsense, or Natural Ideas Counterposed to Unnatural Ideas*. It was a great success in no small measure due to the French Parliament's order to have it burnt.

After Holbach's death, which occurred only a few months before the revolution, his book appeared again under its original title. After the revolution Mellier's ideas were widely disseminated, and in 1790, one of the participants in Babeuf's Conspiracy des égaux, Sylvain Marechal, published *Catéchisme du curé Meslier*.

In an attempt to misrepresent the essence of Mellier's work a book was published in 1847 by Collin de Plancy, which was a crude distortion of Mellier's biography. He was presented as a faithful servant of God throughout the whole of his conscious life, but, it was alleged, after the age of sixty his mind became cloudy and he imagined that a post as an academician awaited him and so got up to a lot of blasphemy. However, the author alleges that, he found time to repent, to renounce his work and ask God's forgiveness.

Moreover, the false *Testament* of Jean Mellier or *The Opinion of the Curé from Etrépigny Addressed to His Parishioners*, published under that title by de Plancy, is popular propaganda of the Catholic religion.

For more than a hundred years the content of the *Testament* was known only through Voltaire's *Extracts*. The original version had sunk into oblivion, and German professors said that there had

never been any Mellier and that Voltaire had invented him. Suddenly, many years later, Rudolph Charles discovered a manuscript copy in a second-hand bookshop in Holland and published the complete text in Amsterdam in 1864 thereby ridding Mellier of the deplorable fate to which Voltaire had condemned him.

But even after the full text appeared bourgeois scholars preferred not to mention it. This is quite understandable: Jean Mellier, being far ahead of his time, expressed a number of ideas of genius regarding a future communist society and, naturally, the bourgeoisie and its underlings could in no way be pleased by this. In his *Testament*, Mellier put forward the idea that the liberation of the people from tyranny and different forms of exploitation must be achieved by the people themselves, there was no one else for them to rely on.

His ideas and appeals were not in vain. The *Testament* exerted a great influence on succeeding generations and as early as the 18th century his name had won a legendary fame. The French Revolution revived his memory and on the 27th of Brumaire in the second year of the Republic, the Left Jacobin, Anacharsis Cloots, from the platform of the National Convention, called for the abolition of all religions and for the dechristianisation of the country. He stigmatised those priests who in words renounced the cloth and faith but in their hearts still cherished faith, and praised those who firmly and vigorously opposed God and religion. In this connection he proposed

to erect a monument in the Temple of Reason to the first priest to renounce faith, Jean Mellier. The Convention unanimously passed a decree on this and sent it to the Committee for Public Education.

In the 1840s communist circles in Paris counted Mellier as one of their founders, along with Babeuf and Buonarroti. Gracchus Babeuf was Mellier's pupil and follower, and he combined three aspects of his teaching:

the idea of a people's revolution which would sweep away all oppressors and tyrants and proclaim the complete equality of the working people;

the idea of exposing Christianity and religion in general and the spreading of a materialist philosophy;

the idea of creating a communist society.

In this way, in spite of all attempts to bury the name and ideas of Jean Mellier his *Testament* had an enormous influence on the development of French social thought, particularly on the French Enlighteners. Mellier is rightly considered to be the father of 18th-century French materialism. His philosophy is a direct development of the materialist trends in the philosophies of Spinoza and Descartes. In addition, he is also deservedly called the father of 18th-century French Utopian communism. He was the first French materialist and atheist of the 18th century. His preaching of materialism and atheism combines with the struggle against a social system based on exploitation and with the idea of creating a society in which

everyone would work. Therefore Mellier was not only a philosopher atheist but also a revolutionary democrat, because his ideas are permeated with revolutionary spirit. He maintained that liberation can only be achieved by revolutionary means. This distinguishes him from the Utopians not only of his own day but of the 19th century too. His book is a sharp weapon in the struggle against the foundations of an exploiting social system.

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# **Gerrard Winstanley**

## **1609-1652**

### **“ACCORDING TO THE LAWS OF FREEDOM AND JUSTICE”**

In April 1649 a group of poorly dressed people made a camp at the foot of St. George's Hill, in Surrey. They called themselves True Levellers and Diggers. Justifying this latter name the little colony was busy from dawn to dusk in the fields. However, from time to time its members would turn up in the neighbouring villages, calling on the villagers to join them. They dreamed of reestablishing true justice, of introducing community of labour, distribution and ownership.

But these appeals were not to everyone's liking. Plough up common land? Restore communality? These words, reaching London, seriously alarmed the members of the State Council. Had they risked their own property and the heads of their supporters in the fight against the king, so that a group of beggars could seize land, even if it was wasteland, on St. George's Hill? But there was more to it: this was the encroachment on property.

Lord Fairfax, Commander in Chief of the New



Model army, was ordered to nip disorder in the bud and disperse the rebels. A detachment of cavalry under the command of a Captain Gladman, was urgently despatched, and there they were, galloping along sodden roads to restore order. But what was this? Instead of a crowd of rioters, they saw peaceful tillers of the soil; instead of faces distorted with anger—weather-beaten peasant faces. Instead of muskets and halberds in their hands they carried spades and hoes. Captain Gladman was embarrassed: there was no one to fight against.

A message flew to Lord Fairfax in London: there were only twenty of these Diggers and there was nothing dangerous whatsoever in their actions.

Soon after the arrival of the message one of the Diggers, Winstanley, appeared in London to set forth the programme of the movement. But there was no room for compassion for the poor in the luxurious salons of aristocratic and business London. And so Winstanley, the leader of the True Levellers, took up his pen to inform the world of the true laws of freedom and justice.

There is very little biographical information about Gerrard Winstanley, not even a short description of his outward appearance, let alone a graphic image. Biographers have, of course, made many attempts to fill in the blanks on the basis of a study of his works, but by far not all of them have been successful.

Gerrard Winstanley was born in Lancashire, and there is a record of his baptism in the parish

church on the 10th of July, 1609. His father dealt in cloth and silk and the same fate awaited Gerard. To all appearance he received a very modest education such as could be given in those days to the son of a small shopkeeper – a few years in the country school. In any case, the only book that he quotes in his pamphlets is the Bible, which in those days was the handbook and frequently the only book, on the country teacher's desk. However, his pronouncement "England is a prison", made his biographers think that he was acquainted with the works of Shakespeare. He might also have known Thomas More's *Utopia*. Yet all this is but a conjecture. The only thing we know with absolute certainty is that he did not have any systematic education.

In the 1630s Winstanley was learning the business in London, and by the outbreak of the Civil War, that is, in the 1640s, he had opened his own business in the City. In 1640 he married Susan King, of whom we know nothing more than her name. The war ruined him, and being left with no means of subsistence he was obliged to seek shelter with his friends in Surrey. To support himself he earned what he could by tending his neighbours' cattle. From 1643 to 1648, up to the appearance of his first pamphlet, he lived the life of the poorest Englishman, heard his complaints and knew his hopes.

The English bourgeois revolution of the mid-17th century split the country into two camps. One, uniting the feudal aristocracy and the established church, rallied round the royal

power. The opposing camp, headed by Parliament, united the mercantile and industrial bourgeoisie of the towns and villages, craftsmen, the peasantry and also representatives of the "new gentry", who in their economic activities adapted themselves to the developing capitalist relations. Parliament defeated the king, because it had the support of the mass of the population who were opposed to the monarchy. The free growth of capitalism was considerably more advantageous to the working people than the preservation of the feudal system.

Parliament was headed by Oliver Cromwell, the creator of the New Model army, in which men were promoted according to their deserts and not their pedigree. Thanks to the victories won by this army, the bourgeoisie achieved their ends, Charles the First was arrested, and his lands and those of his close supporters, as well as those of the church were confiscated, the greater part of them passing into the hands of the bourgeoisie and the gentry. Meanwhile, the poor of the towns and villages, far from gaining anything, found themselves in a considerably worse condition than before, because of the burdens of the war. Moreover, the revolution could not but rouse the consciousness of the broadest strata of the masses. The sustained class struggles, the propaganda and counter-propaganda of various political trends—all helped the more active section of the poorest sections of the population to realise their own specific interests. Once firmly in power the bourgeoisie and the "new gentry" were in no hurry to

satisfy the demands of the masses, with whose help they had routed the royalist forces, which roused a justifiable dissatisfaction among the peasants, craftsmen and soldiers.

By 1647 it had already become clear that serious conflicts existed between the heterogeneous social strata—between the “new gentry” and the bourgeoisie on the one hand and the town and country poor on the other. In the parliamentary party itself there occurred a demarcation between two basic trends: the moderate bourgeoisie and the radical-democrats (the so-called Levellers). The Levellers wanted a broadening of the suffrage, political freedoms, and the proclamation of a republic. The moderate wing in Parliament was not averse to preserving the royal power, seeing in it a means of subduing the people. The army and the Levellers demanded the king’s execution, and Winstanley did not stand aside from these quarrels which were shaking the country.

In December 1648, a small pamphlet appeared bearing the title *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire* and a long sub-title, “Light shining in Buckinghamshire, or, A discovery of the main grounds; original cause of all the slavery in the world, but chiefly in England; presented by way of a declaration of many of the well-affected in that country to all their poor oppressed countrymen of England; and also to the consideration of the present army under the conduct of the Lord Fairfax”. Although this pamphlet was anonymous, researchers believe that Winstanley helped to write it. It appeared shortly before Charles the

First's trial, when the question of a republican system had still not been finally decided. This explains the purpose of the pamphlet—its whole content is spearheaded against royal power and against the church, which actively supported Charles' arbitrary rule. The author calls on the people not to trust Parliament either. He reminds them that Parliament was formed under pressure from the dissatisfied and oppressed people, with whom royal power was no longer able to cope. Parliament had only strengthened the monarch's power; the people thought they had won freedom, when in fact they had given up their freedom through the instrumentality of Parliament.

Evidently the pamphlet was a great success, because a second edition appeared soon afterwards with a continuation entitled: *More Light Shining in Buckinghamshire*. The monarchy had already been overthrown and the author demanded that, with its fall, all special privileges, grants, patents, monopolies, etc., created by royal power should likewise be abolished.

By this time there had appeared in the motley kaleidoscope of political trends a new one, even more leftist than the Levellers. It voiced the interests of the English working people for whom the revolution had only replaced one form of exploitation by another. They were not attracted either by the moderate programme of the Levellers with their admiration for property and bourgeois freedoms, for they had none of the former, and the latter was of little help in the constant search for work and bread. What the Levellers proposed

was not true equality, it was still to be achieved. For this reason the adherents of the new trend began to call themselves True Levellers. Gerrard Winstanley became their leader.

Winstanley's pamphlet, *The New Law of Righteousness* appeared in January 1649. He declared private property, the division into "mine" and "thine" to be the main cause of all social evils. Private property, in the opinion of the author, drives people to crime and then kills them for being criminals. Winstanley and his supporters saw a way out in the revival of communal use of land, in collective labour which would save everyone from poverty and bring peace and happiness to all.

But the True Levellers respected the laws of the country. They were neither rebels nor rioters. They wanted to attract people by personal example and not by force and threats. Propaganda by action was the basic method of the True Levellers. Indeed, on the 8th of April, 1649, Winstanley attracted a couple of dozen people to set up the first colony of Diggers. The upshot is well known: Winstanley could not get the support of the powers-that-be. Moreover, fearing the growing influence of the Diggers, Parliament began to persecute their leaders. In July 1649, the local authorities started a prosecution against them. Winstanley and two of his comrades were brought before the court in Kingston-on-Thames, on the charge of breaking the law of possession.

The court met the suit against the Diggers without even hearing out the accused, and fined

them to a sum exceeding the total value of all the Diggers' property. Non-payment of the fine would give the lords and masters the chance to drive the Diggers forcibly away from the land. Winstanley and his comrades were forced to move their colony, but nowhere were they left in peace. Local landowners were extremely worried by the actions of the Diggers, fearing that their numbers might increase and the poor and workless would begin to occupy waste lands everywhere. Similar agricultural colonies were, in fact, set up in some other counties.

Campaigning for the programme of the Diggers, Winstanley and his associates published a new manifesto: "A Declaration from the Poor Oppressed People of England". Its aim was to theoretically justify their activities on St. George's Hill. The authors declared that, basing themselves on the intrinsic law of love for one another, they had decided to dig up and cultivate the commons and waste lands of England.

The Declaration said that all wealthy people lived in prosperity, feeding and clothing themselves by the labour of other people and that in this was only shame and not nobility, for to give is more blessed than to receive. But the rich receive everything from the hands of the peasants, and what they give is the fruit of others' labour, and not their own. Therefore they are the unjust of the earth.

True republican freedom, the Declaration continues, consists in the unhampered use of the land; every law or custom depriving brothers of

their freedom in respect of land should be rejected and discarded.

Other works by Winstanley also appeared in 1649. They included *A Declaration of the Bloudie and Unchristian Acting of William Star and John Taylor of Walton; To My Lord General and His Council of War; An Appeal to the House of Commons; A Watchword to the City of London and the Army*. In these pamphlets Winstanley upheld the right of the common people to own common lands, accused the ruling circles of inflicting illegal punishments on the Diggers, manhandling them, smashing and setting fire to their homes and destroying the fruits of their joint labour.

Realising the uselessness of appealing to Parliament, Winstanley, in August 1649, appealed directly to the City and the army. In a new pamphlet, *A Watch-Word to the City of London and the Armie* he told of the misadventures of the Diggers in the court at Kingston and of their appeal to the House of Commons, and asked London to decide who was in the right, he or the lords and local authorities who had tried his comrades. He presented a clear picture of the struggle for land between the poor peasants and the prosperous landowners. He demanded an open inquiry, invited lawyers and the clergy to take part in a public debate but it was all useless.

Stern measures were taken against the Diggers' commune at the end of November 1649, when a detachment of soldiers appeared at St. George's Hill, destroyed the Diggers' houses and carted away even the planks. Nevertheless, Winstanley,



who remained free, continued to try and convince the powers-that-be of the injustice of the existing social system. He defended the interests of the oppressed people of England and tried to prove the reasonableness and justness of the Diggers' movement.

Winstanley set out these ideas most clearly in his last work, which appeared in 1652, under the title *Law of Freedom*.

He unfolds a plan for building a society based on the common use of the land and all its fruits. He did not think of this society as of something relating to the distant future, or to some unknown country, but as of something to be achieved immediately and in England. This work ranks with More's *Utopia* and Campanella's *City of the Sun*, with the finest 16th- and 17th-century works of Utopian socialism.

Winstanley as before, regarded the use of violence towards the "elder brother", that is towards the propertied classes, as impossible. No one was to be forced to join his planned communist society, as in that case, many would be against it. The "older brothers" could only be persuaded of the injustice of the existing order.

Winstanley appealed to Cromwell to take immediate steps to declare all land belonging to the state and all increments to it, such as church lands and all parks and forest lands confiscated from the king, free for those who had sacrificed their blood and property to winning it and to set up communes, and also for all who wished to join them. He warned that if Cromwell did not follow

this path the fame he had won by his wisdom would fade for ever and his honour would be soiled.

The long foreword ended with a description of the future society. In Winstanley's opinion, the basic principle of the new social order would be true republican freedom, which consists in a free use of the land representing a common property, and providing man with everything he needs for his existence. These were the foundations on which Winstanley planned to build a just and perfect social order.

The author's system of views had as its starting theoretical points the idea of the primordial equality of all people, of the right of every man to land, and the acknowledgement of labour as the only source of wealth. He proved convincingly that the private ownership of land was the primary source of all social evils. The negation of private ownership led him to the assertion of the necessity to restore the former communal ownership of land, the basic means of production. He proposed the setting up of a republic for the poor without private ownership. His primitive and cloudy aspirations characteristic of the poor plebeians, forerunners of the proletariat, for the restructuring of society on a communist basis merged completely with the peasant programme for the complete elimination of feudalism in England.

Distinct from the Levellers' movement which voiced the demands of small proprietors—peasant farmers and craftsmen, the Diggers spoke in the

name of the stratum of society deprived of property, particularly the poor peasants. But neither the town nor the country proletariat was strong in 17th-century England, which was one of the basic causes of the Diggers' failure to attain practical success.

Gerrard Winstanley foresaw problems which were to become sharper almost two centuries later, and he came close to understanding the class essence of an exploitative state and the necessity to struggle for the elimination of private ownership. In his theoretical teachings there is a great deal that anticipates the basic propositions of Utopian socialism.

Almost nothing is known of Winstanley's life after 1652. No one knows where or when he died, but it is supposed that he died about 1652.

Winstanley's views had a definite influence on later English Utopian socialists. Robert Owen was a follower of John Bellers, who himself, in his turn, developed Winstanley's ideas.



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**Thomas More**  
**1478 – 1535**

## MINDS ARE AWAKENING

The personality and life of that remarkable man, Thomas More, interested his contemporaries and will continue to interest future generations for a long time to come.

He was born in London on the 7th of February, 1478. His father was one of the royal judges, and insofar as in those days such professions were inherited, the same profession awaited Thomas.

The family lived very modestly, although they did not lack means, and Thomas More received an excellent education. Before he had completed his course at St. Anthony's School, the thirteen-year-old boy was taken on as a page by Cardinal Morton, an extremely well-educated man for those times and one of the most outstanding statesmen. Later on More remembered his time in the Morton household with great pleasure.

The cardinal, struck by the boy's exceptional aptitude for languages and literature, persuaded his father, John More, to send the boy to Oxford where he spent about two years in the university. He studied Latin and Greek literature, rhetoric

and logic and acquired the impeccable Latin style which distinguished all his subsequent works. While at Oxford, he got acquainted with a group of humanists who were opposed to the scholasticism of the Middle Ages. However, his father did not approve of his son's preoccupation and in 1494 insisted on his leaving Oxford and returning to London. There he studied law and about 1502 became a lawyer.

This did not, however, break off More's close ties with his humanist friends. In 1497 he had got to know Erasmus Desiderius (of Rotterdam), who later became one of his closest friends. More took an active part in the circle, founded by Erasmus in 1498, which had as its aim the moral purification of the church and the study of ancient literature and the writings of the church fathers.

More's brilliance won for him more and more prestige in humanist circles, and his inexhaustible wit, resourcefulness and generosity attracted new friends to his house. In fact, More became one of the central figures in the history of English humanism. It was in his house that Erasmus wrote his famous work *Praise of Folly*, and himself acknowledged that he had written it with the co-operation of his host.

Although he had become a lawyer More felt no attraction towards jurisprudence. Nevertheless, having taken up this profession against his will, he soon became an accomplished lawyer. He never ran after profit; he put aside part of his income for his children and the rest he gave away with a generous hand. During his days as a prac-

tising lawyer he willingly gave free advice to people who came to him, and in his friendly and always useful advice he showed more concern for their advantage than for his own personal interests.

He worked for several years as a judge in civil cases in London. No one heard as many complaints as he did, and no one was more incorruptible than he. It is not surprising that he soon became the general favourite and protector of the poor in the city.

In 1504, at the age of twenty-six, he was elected to the House of Commons, and immediately came into conflict with the claims of Henry VII. Always in need of money, the king was demanding fresh funds from the Commons in connection with the knighting of the elder Prince Arthur. The king's intention to "clip the fleece" off the working people seemed quite legal, except for one deplorable circumstance. Prince Arthur died two years before Parliament had assembled. Thomas More burst into an angry speech rejecting the demand of the insatiable court. The Commons supported him, and the king was infuriated. Some beardless youth had upset his whole plan. And he took revenge: More was expelled from Parliament, his father was confined in the fortress and a ransom was demanded for his release. Even this seemed too little for the infuriated monarch: Thomas More was forced to retire temporarily to a monastery and even to consider emigration.

Henry's death returned More once again to public affairs, and in January 1510 he was again

elected to Parliament. The same year he was appointed to the responsible post of one of the two assistants to the Sheriff of London. This meant that he became a legal adviser to the Mayor and the Sheriff and represented them in the court of the City of London. In the words of Erasmus, by his conscientiousness in this post More earned the great love of his fellow citizens.

In 1515, while on a visit to Flanders, More made the acquaintance of the outstanding Dutch humanist Peter Aegidius, a distinguished citizen of Antwerp where he was chief secretary and a member of the city council. One of Erasmus' closest friends, a brilliant connoisseur of ancient literature, of the Greek and Latin languages and law, translator of Aesop's fables into Latin, and the author of a treatise on the sources of the Justinian-Codex, Aegidius was a friend of many of the leading European humanists. During this visit, far from his native land, More began work on his best known book, *Utopia*.

He managed to complete his work only after his return to England. On September 3, 1516, through the efforts of his friends Erasmus and Aegidius, his manuscript was published under the title: *The Best State of a Commonwealth and the New Island of Utopia. A Truly Golden Handbook, No Less Beneficial than Entertaining...* . It consists of two parts, the first of which sternly condemns the social order in England at the beginning of the 16th century, and the second, which contrasts this with a better state system supposedly existing on the island of Utopia.



*Utopia* is written in the form of a dialogue between the author, his friend Peter Aegidius, and a certain Raphael Hythlodæus, a fictitious character of Portuguese descent, a sailor and a companion of Amerigo Vespucci. Hythlodæus tells a story about the non-existent island of Utopia, where he allegedly spent five years and which he would never have left if it had not been for his desire to let people know about this new world and about its people, who had created a juster social system than there had ever been anywhere.

What had suggested to More the idea of creating his *Utopia*?

The process which Karl Marx called the primitive accumulation of capital was beginning in the English countryside at the end of the 15th century. English wool had long been highly valued in Europe, at that time linen was an extremely rare and expensive material and cotton fabrics were imported from distant overseas countries and were even more expensive. The rapid rise in the demand for English wool caused a swift transition from farming to sheep rearing, and it had now become a great deal more profitable to the landowners to breed large flocks of sheep than to engage in agriculture. But sheep need vast meadows, so the landowners enclosed the common lands, forbidding the peasants to pasture their cattle on them.

The peasants were forcibly driven from their plots of land, were obliged to sell their belongings for a song and set out to roam the country in search of subsistence. Country dwellers, deprived

of the possibility to support themselves by agriculture, turned into homeless wanderers. Vagrants, who were fit for work, and beggars were liable for corporal punishment and imprisonment in accordance with the law. They were to be tied to a cart and beaten until the blood flowed. For a second offence (vagrancy) half an ear was cut off and for a third offence vagrants were liable to the death penalty. These brutal laws were rigorously observed, and every year thousands of peasants were put to death for vagabondage and petty theft. Thomas More was indignant at such brutality.

But no brutality could stop the growth of vagrancy and it was quite plain to More that the beggars and the vagrants were victims of the social system, based as it was on private ownership. He knew that it was necessary to fight against the causes of this phenomenon and not against its victims. He saw the existence of private ownership as the main cause of all the hardships afflicting the agricultural workers. Driven by genuine sympathy for the oppressed masses, More campaigned for the ending of private ownership as the only means of ensuring universal well-being. Only after doing away with private ownership would people be able to set about building a society based on equality and justice.

Utopia is just such a state.

On the island of Utopia everyone is engaged in public affairs, and everyone cares for the general well-being. Thomas More contrasts the Utopians' frame of mind and their highly developed sense of

collectivism with that of those people who live in the world of private ownership, and he exposes the root causes of the differences in the mentality of the inhabitants of these two worlds. On the island of Utopia the common wealth is a pledge of the wealth of each of its citizens. No one goes in need of anything, unequal distribution of food does not exist there, and people do not have to worry about the morrow for there is an abundance of communal shops at their service. Just as much concern is shown for people who are no longer able to work as for those who work. More saw in such a social system the highest human justice.

The state of Utopia is an economic entity. All land is held in common and the state plans the consumption of products. It takes stock of everything that is produced in regions and in case of necessity redistributes products among individual localities. It may also transfer workers from one region to another. The state is also in charge of foreign trade: surplus products are exported to other countries where one-seventh of them is distributed free among the poor and the rest is sold at low prices.

However, the direct organiser of production is not the state, but the city. The state itself is a federation of cities, of which there were 54 in Utopia (just as in More's contemporary England and Wales).

The basic productive unit in Utopia is the family, engaging in a specific craft. Thomas More supported the preservation of handicrafts as at

that period the role of big industrial enterprises was not yet, and could not be, clear. In practice, More attached no importance to technological progress. The work of each family was controlled by state officials and the entire family output was given up to the state.

All the inhabitants were occupied not only in crafts but in agriculture as well. Every year several members of a family would be moved to the country and would be engaged in agricultural work there for two years. In addition, during harvesting, the necessary additional number of workers would be sent to the country from the towns. Thus, every Utopian worked in agriculture, and was equally obliged to learn a craft. The craft was a family inheritance and any citizen who wished to break the family tradition must move to another family. In this way the family was, in essence, a communal workshop, organised not so much on a kinship as on a productive basis.

In Utopia work was obligatory. Everyone had to engage in physical labour, the only people excused being scholars and officials during the period of carrying out their public duties. Women worked on an equal footing with men. In More's opinion, when everyone is obliged to work and there are no idlers, a six-hour working day will be sufficient to provide for the needs of all members of society.

More's Utopia also had slaves—criminals, condemned to hard labour for life, people who had been condemned to death in other countries and been ransomed by the Utopians and also pri-

soners of war. But slavery, although for life, was not inherited. Thomas More considered Utopian slavery to be a positive fact and counterposed it to the brutality of sentences passed by the courts in the England of his day.

While More's predecessors saw communism as the community of consumable products, he himself placed community of production at the centre of attention, although he was not against the communal organisation of consumption and even gave it preference. Therefore, although in Utopia there were communal dining rooms, used by the overwhelming majority of the citizens, families who wished to organise their own catering had every opportunity to do so.

Thomas More proposed that in his ideal state there would be neither exchange nor money, and the direct distribution of products would be carried out, according to need. All goods produced would be taken to public stores, from where the head of the family could obtain everything necessary for his family without payment.

He did not ignore the question of the living conditions of the citizens of his ideal state. Houses and gardens were public property and every ten years were to be redistributed by lot. Sumptuous palaces were built in the cities, where the Utopians spent their leisure hours.

The Utopians made rational use of all the good things in life, constantly improving their life, doing their best to make it happy and pleasant. It is interesting to note that in this struggle to improve living conditions More gave an important

role to competition. He wrote that in the effort to maintain gardens in good condition the Utopians' zeal is encouraged by competition in caring for them.

Utopia had no money, gold and silver were not valued, collars, chains and fetters for criminals were made from them. Precious stones were children's playthings. Thomas More is castigating a society in which the cult of money flourishes.

State authority in Utopia was organised on a democratic basis. More's officials were not a privileged estate but servants of the people, and all authorities were elected. The Utopians respected their officials.

More condemns war in principle, rebels against standing armies of hired soldiers, and points to the innumerable ills that war brings to the working masses. Nevertheless, his Utopians are sometimes compelled to fight by circumstances.

There were few laws in this state because the just arrangement of life produces high moral qualities in its people. More deemed the social system described by him to be the best and only one fully worthy of being called a just society.

The free-thinking and hatred of various forms of tyranny preached by More had profound progressive importance. He devoted a great deal of space to explaining the need for combatting tyranny not only in *Utopia* but also in his *History of King Richard III*, and in his Latin epigrams. Condemning the autocracy of the monarch and contrasting tyranny with his ideal ruler, More decisively rejected the idea of the "divine" origin of

kings' power and maintained that this power depended on the will of the people. On this basis he posed the question of the responsibility of the ruler to the people, asserting that the people give and take away power of their own will.

More's essay for the coronation of Henry VIII is, in effect, a humanist political programme, counterposing an enlightened monarchy to despotism. This work reflected the political ideals both of More himself and his fellow humanists, who saw in the educated Henry VIII a future patron of scholars and a possible supporter of a humanist reformation of society. In this sense Henry VIII was for More the antithesis of his predecessor, who had permitted arbitrary taxation, terror and lawlessness in politics. But it was not long before everyone saw the king in his true colours—a wicked and brutal tyrant, not one whit better than his predecessors. Suffice it to say that Henry was married six times and sent two of his wives to the scaffold. He pursued a policy that was ruinous for the country, dragging England into a useless war with France, the whole burden of which was borne by the people. Neither did extortions diminish, but whereas previously they had been to satisfy the king's greed, now they were to satisfy royal extravagance: the king built palace after palace and took money from the humblest labourer to pay for his fancies.

Thomas More did not immediately understand the true nature of the king. Several years passed before he finally became convinced that his former dreams of a humane and just ruler, thinking

only of the welfare of the state and his subjects, were not destined to be realised. By this time he had become one of the highest dignitaries of the state. His fame and knowledge were so great that Henry showed him favourable attention, having decided that it was better to have such a man as a friend than an enemy.

When he took up service at court, which he had previously refused, More was not guided by ambition or cupidity; he acted as a citizen who wanted to try his hand in a new field.

At first he enjoyed dizzying success at the court of Henry VIII. Swiftly ascending the ladder of state service he became a member of the King's Council in 1518 and read all petitions addressed to the king. His duties involved not only informing the king of the contents of petitions, but also of becoming himself thoroughly acquainted with the details of the case and presenting a carefully considered decision for the king's consideration. In May 1521 he became an assistant in the treasury and was knighted. He frequently took part in diplomatic missions, accompanying the Chancellor Thomas Wolsey on his journeys to the Continent. In 1523 he became Speaker of the House of Commons, where his independent conduct considerably annoyed the all-powerful Wolsey. But even Wolsey could not fail to appreciate More's abilities as a statesman, his versatility and efficiency. More's influence was so great that in 1525 he was appointed to the important post of Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

Henry VIII valued Thomas More highly, seeing



in him a man of broad vision, a brilliant statesman and, what was no less important, an extremely witty interlocutor. Naturally, More's enormous popularity played a decisive role in this idyllic friendship between the royal despot and the scholar-humanist. It was precisely for this reason that More was forgiven both for his independent conduct and his unwillingness to be an obedient weapon in the hands of the king. Henry even visited More in his humble house and held long conversations with him not only on affairs of state, but also on literature, mathematics and astronomy.

Nevertheless, More had already understood the character of the king. Once, after such a visit, More confessed to his son-in-law that the king would, without thinking twice, sacrifice More's head, if by doing so he could acquire even one insignificant castle in France, with whom England was then at war.

In 1529 More was awarded The Great Seal of Lord Chancellor of England. At a ceremonial meeting in Westminster the Duke of Norfolk presented the new Chancellor. In his traditional speech of reply More expressed a sober judgment apropos his appointment. He considered it to be full of dangers and difficulties and far from being an honour.

As Chancellor he displayed remarkable efficiency, complete incorruptibility and great energy; he brought order into the extremely neglected work of his predecessors. Integrity, incorruptibility, equity and concern for the general

welfare were the qualities that More displayed as a statesman. He firmly adhered to his convictions and nothing could make him act against his conscience, not even the threat of death. When he entered Henry's service More asked only one thing: that he might be permitted to obey God first and only after that the king. For a true believer like More this request had a profound significance. It was precisely his faith that cost him his head.

The Reformation had a decisive effect on More's political career. The clash between him and Henry VIII came about on religious grounds. Thomas More was a Catholic and therefore could not accept the Reformation which had begun in Germany in 1517. The Reformation was a broad social and ideological movement of an anti-feudal character. In its concrete form it was a struggle against the Pope and the Catholic church as a whole, and this More, as a Catholic and a statesman, could not support.

He saw in it anarchy and complete freedom of the individual from any kind of obligation whatsoever. This is where More's political views manifested themselves, and also his fear of a mass movement in which he could see only the destructive element. He sympathised wholeheartedly with the sufferings of the people and passionately wanted to ease them, but he did not think that a broad mass movement would lead to the destruction of social injustice.

To the revolutionary methods More counterposed the methods of education, and argu-

ment, which subsequently became characteristic of Utopian socialists. He could not grasp entirely the progressive role of people's movements acting within the framework of the Reformation. His socialism, quite understandably, could not be connected with the mass revolutionary movement; only in the 19th century did the objective conditions were created for the merger of scientific socialism and the working-class movements.

It was just this historical narrowness that prompted More to oppose the Reformation, while remaining a critic of the existing Catholic church. He was never a militant Catholic.

Initially, Henry VIII opposed the Reformation. It is interesting to note that in 1521 he published a book attacking Martin Luther, to which the latter replied with an extremely rude article. Some time later there appeared *Vindication of Henry Against Luther*. In this work More fully supports Henry, at that time still a zealous Catholic.

Thomas More remained a faithful Catholic and opponent of the Reformation to the end of his days, but Henry soon changed his attitude towards the Reformation. Not, incidentally, because of any change in his religious convictions, but because it seemed to him that for political reasons it would be more advantageous to be a supporter rather than an opponent of the Reformation.

The reasons which caused the English king to change his views were entirely earthly. Henry had earlier contracted a marriage with a Spanish princess for political reasons and now this marriage was no longer necessary. Henry asked the Pope

for a divorce, so that he could marry Anne Boleyn, who was considered a beauty. The Pope, to please the Spanish king, declined the request. The enraged Henry used the refusal to break with the Pope, declared himself head of the English (Anglican) church, divorced the Queen and married Anne Boleyn.

Purely financial considerations also played an important part in this matter. Henry VIII's bellicose policy and his extravagance had long since emptied the Treasury coffers, and the calculating king thought that by introducing the Reformation and separating the English church from the Papacy he could save those dues which previously went to Rome and would now come to him, and, in addition, by confiscating monastic property and lands he would be able to replenish the Treasury. This is what Henry did later and so the English 16th-century Reformation was implemented in the interests of the king and the Treasury.

More's upright character could not reconcile itself to the predatory Reformation, which was enriching the king and his favourites. Being an honest man, Lord Chancellor More resigned.

The king did not immediately venture to attack his erstwhile favourite. More's influence in bourgeois circles and even among the courtiers was too strong, and they began a gradual stealthy approach. First of all, his small estate was confiscated and he was deprived of his modest means of livelihood, as he had never been very rich. They then tried to involve him in the case of

a nun, alleged to have threatened the king, but it was clearly a trumped-up charge and More emerged without a stain on his reputation. However, he did not delude himself and with sad irony said to his daughter: "To postpone a case doesn't mean to cancel it."

Finally, when in 1533 Parliament, frightened by the king's threats, acknowledged him as head of the church, confirmed his divorce and proclaimed Anne Boleyn's daughter, born before the marriage (the future Queen Elizabeth the First), as the heiress to the throne, More refused to take the oath required of him, for which he was charged with high treason and arrested.

More's arrest once again showed that the conflict between him and the king had gone beyond the limits of a religious quarrel and had taken a deeper, more tragic character of a clash between two world outlooks. By refusing to take the oath More counterposed his own adherence to principles to the king's arbitrariness, his own integrity to the moral decay of the court, fortitude to the Parliament's servile worship of power. In the last months of his life the former Chancellor appears before us as a person of amazing integrity, faithful in his actions to the ideals proclaimed in *Utopia*.

Thrown into a dungeon, deprived of books and undergoing great physical suffering, More spent more than a year without losing his fortitude. He defended himself with great dignity, refuting the false accusations brought against him, but not recanting his convictions. The judges found him

guilty and passed a most brutal sentence, typical of those times.

Taking into account More's previous services the king "mitigated" the sentence, replacing the execution by torture by beheading. When he learned of this, More remarked, with the spirit and humour that never deserted him to the end: "God spare my friends from such mercy."

Thus the renowned humanist and Lord Chancellor found himself on the scaffold. On mounting the scaffold More wanted to address the crowd but the sheriff would not let him speak. The executioner, in accordance with custom, asked his forgiveness. More, embracing him said: "You are doing me the greatest service I could ask of a man. Go ahead, don't fear. My neck is short, direct your stroke correctly, don't disgrace yourself."

The executioner wanted to bandage his eyes.

"I'll do it myself," said More and with these words pulled out a kerchief he had ready, bound up his eyes and laid his head on the block. "Wait a moment," he said suddenly. "Let me take my beard out of the way. It is in no way guilty of high treason."

Thus Thomas More bravely ended his life, dying because he was not willing to renounce his beliefs to please the king.

More's tragic fate buried the humanistic illusions, faith in an enlightened monarch surrounded by good counsellors. It was neither his statesmanship, nor his service to the king that brought More fame, but his socialist ideas which

played an enormous part in awakening the minds of future generations. The title of his remarkable work *Utopia* has become proverbial. The definition "Utopian socialist" derives from it, and its author became one of the founders of Utopian socialism, in which ripened the germs of brilliant ideas.



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**Henri Saint-Simon**  
**1760 – 1825**



## THE FUTURE BELONGS TO US

This man's fate was remarkable. He was born an aristocrat, but without the slightest regret broke with his privileged estate. He was a millionaire and a pauper who found shelter with his own servant. He commanded a regiment, fought under the banners of Washington himself, and—what an irony of fate!—humbly begged the powers that be to pay attention to his teaching. He was a thinker and a fighter, a dreamer and a scientist, and even if there is a great deal that seems to us naive, even laughable in his works, one cannot but be amazed at forwardness of his views, and faithfulness to the ideal of serving the people.

Claude-Henri de Saint-Simon was born in Paris in 1760 into an aristocratic family. His father, Count Balthazard de Saint-Simon, served the Polish king as head of the guards brigade. Judging by his temper and cast of mind he would probably have dealt with his first-born with his own hands if he had been able to foresee what the latter would become in the future, a traitor to his class. And yet no other member of this

ancient family, which traced its origins back almost to Charlemagne himself, brought it such fame as did Claude-Henri.

The young count was educated by governors and private tutors, one of whom was the famous encyclopaedist and scholar Jean D'Alembert. Contact with him, acquaintance with literature and the works of the representatives of the Enlightenment, the spirit of free-thinking, of rejection of violence, so characteristic of pre-revolutionary France, had a decisive influence on the formation of Saint-Simon's personality. A rebel was growing up under the roof of Count Balthazard's luxurious mansion. Henri was only thirteen when he refused to be confirmed in the church, making a public declaration of his rejection of God, for which his father confined him in a fortress for correction. Henri insistently demanded that the jailor set him free and then, angered by a refusal, wounded him with a knife, seized the keys and gained his freedom.

Henri distinguished from his brothers by his persistence and resoluteness. Once he was bitten by a stray dog. He immediately cauterised the wound with a burning coal and thereafter began to carry a pistol in order to kill himself at the first sign of rabies. His servant was ordered to awaken him in the mornings with the words: "Get up, count, great accomplishments await you." And subsequently he never forgot the "great accomplishments", frequently interrupting his talk with a reminder of the fame he had to achieve.

In 1777, at the age of seventeen, Saint-Simon joined the army and was quickly promoted to junior officer rank. Two years later he went voluntarily to America where he took part in the War of Independence on the side of the colonists. He was later to write proudly that he served under the banners of Washington. He displayed great courage and was decorated with an order by the newly created United States. While returning home he was taken prisoner by the English. They could not forgive the young count for his part in the War of Independence and together with other prisoners he was sent to Jamaica. He returned to France only in 1784, and soon took command of the regiment. A brilliant career was opening up before the scion of the Saint-Simon aristocratic family, but an idle life could not satisfy the young count.

Henri continued his military service in France until the revolution broke out. Educated on the ideas of the encyclopaedists, having gone through the American revolution, Saint-Simon enthusiastically welcomed the events of 1789. Even his brothers' emigration and the arrest of his sister did not cool the revolutionary fervour of the rebellious count. He went back to Picardy, his home province, and voluntarily renounced his title, taking instead the name Bonhomme, which means "simple man".

At that time many people changed their names. For many of them it was no more than a tribute to fashion, a striving to adapt themselves to the stormy events of the revolution, but for Saint-Si-

mon the rejection of his family name was a conscious act stemming from inner convictions.

No less remarkable is the name he chose for himself, Bonhomme, which is what the French peasant had been called for many ages. Saint-Simon, becoming "citizen Bonhomme", wanted to emphasise who, in his opinion, was at the focus of the events that were shaking France. He did not just emphasise, he spent the first two years of the revolution in the province, among the peasants. Meanwhile, the revolution was developing quite differently from what the former count had expected. The big bourgeoisie, finding themselves in power, were in no hurry to establish the "golden age", in which the philosophers of the Enlightenment and their numerous followers believed so firmly. Saint-Simon decided to satisfy the aspirations of the peasants in his own way. In 1791 he began to buy up land confiscated from the Church and the Royalists and resell it in small plots to needy peasants. One may, of course, be surprised at the naivety with which Saint-Simon set about solving the agrarian problem, but there can be no doubt about the genuineness of his intentions.

His partner in these land deals was a Spanish acquaintance, Baron Redern. The success of the new venture surpassed all expectations, and this success brought with it wealth. Who knows, how Saint-Simon's life would have developed further if it had not been for the chastising hand of the Jacobin dictatorship. The hapless millionaire found himself in the dungeons of the Luxem

bourg prison and only the counter-revolutionary Thermidor upheaval saved him from the guillotine. Having spent about a year in prison he took to speculation again on his release.

In 1796 the joint fortune of Saint-Simon and Redern was estimated at 4 million francs. But at this point the career of the successful trader was stopped short in the most unexpected way. Baron Redern, who had prudently fled abroad during the terror, came back to Paris and laid claim to the whole fortune. Insofar as the operations had been conducted on his behalf, Saint-Simon had to be content with compensation of 150 thousand francs. Finding himself out of business, Saint-Simon, with his usual energy, took up the study of natural sciences.

This new step in his life was by no means accidental. Deep disappointment with the results of the revolution, which had only replaced one kind of exploitation by another, the sharp contrasts between poverty and wealth, that had reached unprecedented dimensions during the years of the Directoire finally killed any hope that Saint-Simon had had of achieving universal harmony by such means. Not revolution, but science was now for him the only means of healing the sores of human society. He now saw the whole purpose of his life as the creation of universal science of human society. He used the remainder of his wealth to maintain a hospitable home where he regularly received the most outstanding Parisian scientists, and then spent several years travelling around Europe, attending lectures of many

famous scientists. Persistent study and experiments occupied him completely for many years. His first work, *Lettres d'un habitant de Genève à ses contemporains* (Letters of an Inhabitant of Geneva to His Contemporaries) was published in 1803. This original work is an utopian plan for restructuring society, although it is set out in a rudimentary and obscure form.

By 1805 his money had run out and he found himself on the verge of poverty. He relates in his autobiography how, being in dire want, he approached Count Ségur with a request to find him some kind of work, even if only some lowly office job. Ségur offered him a job as a copy-clerk in a Paris pawnshop, where he worked nine hours a day, and, in addition, continued to work on scientific questions at night. His condition improved somewhat after he met his former servant Diard. At Diard's expense Saint-Simon brought out his second work in 1808. This was his *L'introduction aux travaux scientifiques du XIXe siècle* (Introduction to the Scientific Works of the 19th Century). Copies were sent to leading scientists and statesmen with a request that they would give their opinions and help him in his further work. But he waited in vain for answers.

Diard soon died and Saint-Simon once again found himself with almost nothing. The kind of existence he was eking out can be gathered from his notes, dated 1812, in which he said that he was living on bread and water, had been working without light and had sold everything, right down to his clothes. But financial troubles could not

break his will. The more difficult his circumstances the harder he worked. And it was precisely during these difficult years that his views on society finally took shape and he set them out in a number of mature works: *Travail sur la gravitation universelle* (Work on Universal Gravitation), *Mémoire sur la science de l'homme* (An Essay on the Science of Man), and articles in the collections *L'Industrie* and *L'Organisateur*. In 1821 he published *Du système industriel* (Essay on the Industrial System), addressed to the king, the parliamentary deputies, landowners, traders, factory-owners and other industrialists. In his *L'Introduction* he emphasises that the root cause of the crisis which society is experiencing is a change in the social system, that the essence of the crisis consists in the transition from a feudal and theological system to an industrial and scientific one, and that it will inevitably continue until the formation of the new system is completed. He goes on to write that the aim of his *Du système industriel* was to draw public attention to the true nature of the great social reorganisation bequeathed to the 19th century; to prove that this reorganisation is ripe and cannot be postponed; to point out, clearly and in detail, by what means it should be effected—in a word, to assist, as far as philosophy is capable of assisting, the formation and completion of an industrial and scientific system whose establishment alone can put an end to the contemporary social disturbances.

In the second part of his *L'Introduction* Saint-Simon endeavours to answer the questions: what

were the reasons which, diverting the French Revolution from its original goal, brought society to, and are keeping it in, its sorry state, and by what means can society get out of this state? He justly remarked that the revolution was still far from being completed, and that it would be complete only with the full realisation of the goal which was predetermined for it by the march of events, that is, the formation of a new political system. But his "new" system was fully "compatible" with royal power, which should take steps to involve industrialists in political activities. He considered that the two forces—the industrialists and the royal authority—were interested above all else in union and that their union should be brought about as fully and as speedily as possible.

In his *Adresse au Roi* (Address to the King), intended for Louis XVIII, Saint-Simon pointed out that the moral and political disorders experienced by France and a number of other European countries, could be explained by the fact that the old social system had been destroyed and the new one was not yet completely formed. He said that this crisis would end and order firmly established only when the organisation of the new system was begun with full vigour. Then, on the basis of a detailed analysis of the failures which had caused a great deal of harm to society, he advised the king to abolish the nobility and set up an electoral body of industrialists and utilise works of scientists in the management of society.



In his *Adresse aux philanthropes* (Address to Philanthropists), he emphasised that the only means by which Europeans could overcome the political crisis, brought about by educational progress, consisted in the complete removal of political power from the hands of theologians, the nobility, the military and metaphysicians.

Saint-Simon bore his material difficulties more calmly than indifference towards his works, into which he had put his heart and soul and which he considered to be a great step forward on the road to human happiness. He couldn't bear the persistent hushing up of his works, and in 1823 he attempted to commit suicide, surviving only by chance.

But his run of bad luck ended in the twenties, and his life gradually began to improve. He had pupils and followers, among whom was Lunin, one of the Decembrists, who had landed up in Paris with the Russian troops in 1812 and there made the acquaintance of Saint-Simon.

Saint-Simon's preaching of a peaceful transformation of society, addressed to kings and rich men – bankers, industrialists and merchants – attracted the attention of some patrons. They promoted the publication of his works, provided him with sufficient means to live on and, consequently, to work intensively.

He continued to do a great deal of fruitful work. His *Catéchisme des industriels* (Industrialists' Catechism) appeared in 1823-1824; *Opinions littéraires, philosophiques et industrielles* (Literary, Philosophical and Industrial Discourses) in 1825.

Finally, he started on his chief work, *Le nouveau christianisme* (The New Christianity), which was to give to the future "industrial society" a new religion that retained from Christianity only its humanist element. One may say that it was precisely in these latter works that Saint-Simon's universal teaching became finally crystallised.

In his discourses he proceeded from the acknowledged existence of a universal objective law and causality of all the phenomena of nature and society. He put forward the idea of the regularity of social development at the base of which lies the progress of reason, science, morality and religion. In the final analysis changes in social life are, in his opinion, the result of progress of human reason.

Saint-Simon went further than the 18th-century rationalists and also many previous creators of early communist teachings, as well as his contemporaries – the Utopian socialists. Engels compared him with Hegel: the French sociologist introduced elements of dialectics into his philosophy. He rightly saw human society as a constantly developing, integral organism, which unites its members not only by definite philosophic, religious and moral principles, but also by socially useful work which is a natural necessity and duty of man. He rightly noted the absence of continuity in the process of historical development and pointed to the alternation of evolutionary with revolutionary movement.

True, Saint-Simon was already suspecting property of having become the apple of discord in

society. He regarded the French Revolution as a revolution of the "have-nots" against the "haves". "...To recognise the French Revolution as a class war, and not simply one between nobility and bourgeoisie, but between nobility, bourgeoisie and the non-possessors", wrote Engels on this score, "was, in the year 1802, a most pregnant discovery." <sup>1</sup>

Saint-Simon foretold that every new historical period, being progressive in relation to the previous period, must, within a definite time, give place to a higher social system. Therefore, the author of *Le nouveau christianisme* does not regard his contemporary society as any sort of a "human paradise", but on the contrary he subjects capitalism to the sharpest possible criticism and exposes French society in which the poverty and suffering of the working masses becomes an essential condition of its existence.

Investigating the causes of all the evils of bourgeois society, Saint-Simon noted that society has two enemies which it fears and hates equally: anarchy and despotism. In his quest for a solution to the contradictions of capitalist society he came to the conclusion that revolution had not achieved the purpose, that it had not built a new society, and he considered that people should have a society that would provide the greatest good for the greatest number of people.

In place of a society based on the power of money, exploitation, hypocrisy and deception, Saint-Simon creates on the pages of his books a social system which provides the greatest good

for the greatest number of people and where everyone works.

His last work *Le nouveau christianisme* describes in greater detail this society. All the weakness and strength of this Utopian socialist are concentrated in it. He tried to draw upon and interpret all the knowledge accumulated by society. And not only to draw upon, not only to interpret but to put it to the service of the toiler, transform it into a "magic elixir" to cure suffering mankind.

Saint-Simon's new society is an "industrial" society, a society of "industrialists". In this the great thinker is taking a backward step in comparison with, say, Jean Mellier, in that he does not do away with private ownership. He is, in general, against its destruction.

He does not break with capitalist ownership, although he greatly modifies it. Saint-Simon's division of society into classes, distinctive and naive, flows from the preservation of capitalist ownership. There are parasites (idlers) and toilers (the working people). The nobility, rentiers and military men he classes as parasites, ridicules them and, quite understandably, does not include them in his ideal society. He reckons among the working people not only hired manual workers but also factory-owners, merchants and bankers. The reason for this is that once entrepreneurs and workers are engaged in production they belong to one and the same class and their interests are identical. The only difference between them is that the capitalists are the leaders of production while the workers are the executors.

In this connection Engels rightly remarked that Saint-Simon preserved, together with his proletarian trend, a certain bourgeois trend because he had a negative attitude towards political struggle and revolution, and relied only on preaching love for the people to the wealthy. He appealed for help to a renovated religion, hoping to influence the king and the rulers through the church. At the same time Engels pointed out that Saint-Simon displayed a special interest in the fate of the largest and poorest class. Saint-Simon's point of view is simply a reflection of the immaturity of the proletariat and the failure to understand the fundamentally opposite nature of interests of these two basic classes of capitalist society.

"Industrialists"—workers, craftsmen and capitalists (with their own capital)—live in Saint-Simon's ideal society. But these capitalists do not enjoy their own wealth, nor spend their days in satisfied idleness. Work must be obligatory for all. According to Saint-Simon, the rich will be the servants of the people in the future social system, their job will be to perform organisational functions. He maintained that in the conditions of the new industrial regime the common interests of the whole collective should be entirely in the hands of scientists and artists on the one hand and industrialists on the other. He tried to persuade his readers that the interests of these groups coincided with the interests of the masses, and that these intellectuals belong to the class of the working people and are at the same time their leaders. They are, therefore, to manage affairs of state.

He considered these "leaders" to be toilers just as the factory workers, and contrasted them with the idle parasitic elements, the rentiers, who did not take part in social production. The main distinguishing feature of his "industrial" system is the absence of idle, parasitic elements. All temporal power is concentrated in the hands of the council of industrialists, whilst the spiritual is in the hands of the Academy of Sciences. These organisations will also ensure the planned guidance of the whole national economy. For this reason he called his future social system an "association" in contrast to bourgeois individualism and capitalist anarchy of production.

He gives a great deal of attention to the organisation and management of production. He defined this as the science of production, that is, a science which has as its aim the establishment of an order of things "most favourable for all types of production". The drawing up of the budget will be the responsibility of the most important industrialists. As a result of such harmony the social organisation will satisfy sensible people in all social classes, and there will be no need for revolts and the maintenance of a large army and police forces to suppress them. Saint-Simon counterposed the "positive science" of economic management to the views of the liberals, who were occupied with improving political institutions. In this connection the position of the "poorest class" increasingly attracted his attention.

At the end of his life he considered the ultimate

goal of people's activity to be the improvement of the moral and physical condition of the most numerous class, and the creation of a social organisation capable of directing this activity in a better way and ensuring its predominance over all other activities.

In other words, Saint-Simon had closely approached the idea of socialism, but his socialism was Utopian, and he remained an idealist. He did not understand that the possibility of social production on planned lines presupposes the transfer of the means of production to public ownership, which was exactly what he did not propose to introduce. But how can one plan for and manage enterprises which are in private hands? Who would give representatives of society such authority?

Saint-Simon was right in believing that planning would have a beneficial effect on the development of the national economy and the growth of productivity of labour, but his greatest error was his conviction that the new society could be created by peaceful means. The followers of the "new Christianity" concept had to win the world using only persuasion. He did not approve of violence and in order to avert dangers recommended his followers to preach actively to the rich.

Marx and Engels revealed the reasons for the preaching of "peaceful means" and the rejection by Utopian socialists of the class struggle. "The founders of these systems," they wrote, "see, indeed, the class antagonisms, as well as the action of the decomposing elements in the prevailing

form of society. But the proletariat ... offers to them the spectacle of a class without any historical initiative or any independent political movement.”<sup>2</sup> Therefore for Utopian socialists the history of mankind’s development is reduced to propaganda and attempts to implement their plans. They endeavour to rise above the antagonism between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie and to improve the condition of all members of society. “In the formation of their plans,” Marx and Engels write, “they are conscious of caring chiefly for the interests of the working class, as being the most suffering class. Only from the point of view of being the most suffering class does the proletariat exist for them.”<sup>3</sup> The works of the Utopian socialists, according to Marx and Engels, “contain also a critical element. They ... attack every principle of existing society. Hence they are full of the most valuable material for the enlightenment of the working class.”<sup>4</sup>

Saint-Simon was one of those Utopian socialism whose works became ideological premises for creating the theory of scientific communism. “German theoretical socialism,” wrote Engels, “will never forget that it rests on the shoulders of Saint-Simon, Fourier and Owen – three men who, in spite of all their fantastic notions and all their utopianism, stand among the most eminent thinkers of all time and whose genius anticipated innumerable things the correctness of which is now being scientifically proved by us.”<sup>5</sup>

In their *The German Ideology* Marx and Engels devoted a special section to Saint-Simon and his



followers, which is not only of scientific significance *per se*, but also demonstrates that the evaluation of these great thinkers rests on their profound knowledge of the most of his works devoted to Utopian socialism.

In his article "Progress of Social Reform on the Continent", Engels notes that in France, after Babeuf, "the next French social reformer was Count de Saint-Simon", that "the singularities and eccentricities of the Saint-Simonians very soon became the victims of French wit", and that all the doctrines of the Saint-Simonians "were enveloped in the clouds of an unintelligible mysticism... Their economical principles, too, were not unexceptionable; the share of each of the members of their communities in the distribution of produce was to be regulated, firstly, by the amount of work he had done; and, secondly, by the amount of talent he displayed."<sup>6</sup> Saint-Simon is characterised as a "champion of social reform" and a supporter of social equality.

In his *Anti-Dühring* Engels speaks of Saint-Simon with great respect. He writes: "In 1816 he (Saint-Simon.—*Ed.*) declares that politics is the science of production, and foretells the complete absorption of politics by economics. The knowledge that economic conditions are the basis of political institutions appears here only in embryo. Yet what is here already very plainly expressed is the idea of the future conversion of political rule over men into an administration of things and a direction of processes of production - that is to say, 'the abolition of the state'."<sup>7</sup> Engels also un-

derlined the contradictions in Saint-Simon's views, pointing out that for him "the middle-class movement, side by side with the proletarian, still had a certain significance".<sup>8</sup>

Lenin considered French Utopian socialism to be one of the theoretical sources of Marxism. At the same time he exposed the historical weakness of Utopian socialism: "It criticised capitalist society, it condemned and damned it, it dreamed of its destruction, it had visions of a better order and endeavoured to convince the rich of the immorality of exploitation.

"But utopian socialism could not indicate the real solution. It could not explain the real nature of wage-slavery under capitalism, it could not reveal the laws of capitalist development, or show what *social force* is capable of becoming the creator of a new society."<sup>9</sup>

Saint-Simon's life and activity embraced an extremely complicated period in France's history. His literary activity lasted almost a quarter of a century, from 1802 to 1825. He witnessed the last years of the reign of Louis XVI, the French Bourgeois Revolution, Thermidor, the Napoleonic regime and, finally, the restoration of the Bourbons. This was the critical period for France, the period of bitter struggle between feudalism and capitalism. During it the bourgeoisie had, to a large extent, succeeded in retaining the role of the leader of the "third estate". Contradictions between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat continued to intensify. Bourgeois science could only state these contradictions but was unable to understand them.

As far as Saint-Simon is concerned, the liberal and socialist tendencies in his system were irreconcilable. Gradually, the socialist tendencies began to overcome the liberal and held the predominant place in his theory. Saint-Simon had begun to consider the proletariat, and not the "industrialists" in general, as the foundation of his contemporary society. He wrote that the foundation of the contemporary people's pyramid was the working people. His basic task, he thought, was to work on improving the moral and physical existence of the poorest class.

He came to the conclusion that in the sphere of economic relations, rule over people would eventually be replaced by rule over things. In his opinion, a similar process should come about in the sphere of political relations also. Therefore the ultimate goal set by this great thinker was a radical change in the life of the poorest class, the proletariat.

Saint-Simon did not doubt that this would happen. He didn't even doubt it in his last hour when, dying, wrecked by physical suffering, he pronounced his great prophecy, addressed to his pupils and descendants: "The Future Belongs to Us."



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**Edouard Vaillant**  
**1840-1915**

## ON THE BARRICADES OF THE PARIS COMMUNE

In connection with Vaillant's candidature for the office of President of France in 1913 Lenin wrote: "The vote in favour of Vaillant was a demonstration in honour of the Commune. Vaillant is a living memory of it. One has only to see the welcome which Parisian workers give the white-haired Vaillant when he appears on the platform to realise this.

"And now, in the very same Versailles where bourgeois France in 1871 sold its country to Bismarck in order to crush the revolt of the proletariat, and in the very same hall where forty-two years ago was heard the beastly howling of the reactionary landlords of France who were longing for a king, the working-class deputies voted for a veteran Communard." <sup>1</sup>

What was Vaillant? Marie-Edouard Vaillant was a French socialist, a follower of Blanqui, one of the leaders of the left wing of the Second International, a member of the Executive Commission of the Paris Commune, its active defender until

the last moment, and a member of the General Council of the First International. He was one of the founders of the Socialist Party of France.

Vaillant was born on the 29th of January, 1840, in Vierzon in the department of Cher. His father was a notary who took little interest in his son. But his mother was very attached to him and later on followed him into exile. She was a believer and gave her son the name Marie so that the Blessed Virgin would protect him.

Soon after his birth his parents moved to Paris. At the age of eight he was sent to the Collège Sainte-Barbe, known for its stern rules. Vaillant suffered a lot there and was often shut up in a punishment room for breaches of discipline. In September 1857 he gained his baccalaureat and entered l'Ecole centrale where he showed a great bent for mathematics. He completed his course in this educational establishment in 1862, receiving a diploma as an engineer.

From 1862 to 1866 he attended the Sorbonne, studied medicine, and did a lot of work in the Museum of Natural History and in various chemistry laboratories.

His political views were formed during the growing crisis in the Second Empire, the increasing dissatisfaction of a section of the big and petty bourgeoisie with the regime of Napoleon III, and the intensification of the working-class movement. At this period socialist ideas were spreading fast and Vaillant was attracted by them. A particularly important landmark in the formation of his socialist world outlook was

a visit to Germany and Austria in 1866. He gained a detailed knowledge of the working-class movement in Germany and became acquainted with the then leaders of the local working-class movement in Vienna. He read works on scientific socialism and took up a serious study of economic sciences, corresponded with Feuerbach and joined the Geneva German section of the International. Vaillant received his membership card of this organisation from Johann Philipp Becker, a friend and comrade-in-arms of Marx and Engels. He also took part in the Lausanne Congress of the First International in 1867.

The Franco-Prussian war found him back in Paris. The news of the French capitulation at Sedan, which reached Paris on September 3, shook the city. A powerful street demonstration by the workers broke out spontaneously. They headed for the Bourbon palace and the Louvre with shouts of "Down with the King! Long live the republic!" The Blanquists called for an uprising by the workers which they tried to turn into a revolution.

In order to paralyse the actions of the masses the Left opposition deputies were insisting on the dethronement of Napoleon III and the transfer of power to the Corps législatif. But the bourgeois deputies, even after they had received the news of Napoleon's defeat and capitulation, continued to hesitate. It was only under pressure from the masses, who had not only come out on the streets but had burst into the Bourbon palace, that the deputies proclaimed the Republic.

Vaillant was in the front ranks of the insurrectionists. It was the workers who had forced the deputies to proclaim the Republic, but the bourgeois republicans appropriated the fruits of this action, as they succeeded in setting up an anti-workers government of National Defence. This government sabotaged the defence of Paris which was surrounded by German troops.

Marx wrote sarcastically, that compelled to choose "between national duty and class interest, the Government of National Defence did not hesitate one moment to turn into a Government of National Defection."<sup>2</sup>

The siege of Paris began on September 19, 1870. Vaillant enlisted in the artillery of the Paris National Guard. The capital was protected by a rampart, 34-km in length, round which ran a 15-m ditch. Considerable, although poorly-armed forces were concentrated here. The French government and Bismarck started armistice negotiations, and the Germans, making use of the panic terror of the French bourgeoisie in the face of their own people, threatened that if Paris were not taken in the course of a few days the government would be overthrown by the mob. When news leaked out about the behind-the-scenes negotiations Paris was seized with anger and the government was compelled to reject Bismarck's terms and solemnly announce that they would "resist to the end".

However, the Parisian workers did not trust the government and on the initiative of members of the International vigilance committees were



formed in all twenty districts of the capital. Four delegates were sent from each district committee, and they were members of the Central Committee of 20 Districts, among them Vaillant. In addition, he was on the Central Committee of the National Guard.

On 13th and 14th of September the Central Committee of 20 Districts published a manifesto-programme setting out general defence measures, measures for overcoming the food and housing crisis, measures for the defence of Paris and so on. Vaillant signed this document together with Jules Vallès, a journalist who later on became chief editor of the newspaper *Cri du peuple* issued during the period of the Paris Commune, and who fought on the barricades to the last day.

Vaillant became friends with Blanqui and his follower Gustave Tridon. He valued Blanqui's intellect, which he described as clear and accurate, and armed with knowledge; he was struck by Blanqui's contempt for all that was only fine words and lofty phrases, for everything that was not translated in action. For Vaillant he was the model of a revolutionary. Decisive and courageous, Blanqui struck terror among the bourgeoisie. He was sentenced to death, for 37 years he languished in jail, but nothing could break this remarkable revolutionary. During the days of the Commune Thiers flatly refused to exchange the imprisoned Blanqui for the archbishop of Paris, declaring that this would be as good as giving the Commune a whole corps.

Marx and Engels valued Blanqui highly as a vigorous opponent of capitalist society. But they sharply criticised his conspiratorial tactics and his inability to understand that the uprising could only succeed if it was effected by the working people under the leadership of a revolutionary party. Writing on this subject Lenin said: "Blanquism is a theory which repudiates the class struggle. Blanquism expects that mankind will be emancipated from wage-slavery, not by the proletarian class struggle, but through a conspiracy hatched by a small minority of intellectuals."<sup>3</sup>

By the end of September an extremely complicated situation had developed in Paris. The government, in spite of the threat of occupation, was trying hard to prevent the National Guard from taking part in the defence of the city, realising that the National Guard, which did not want to be disarmed, would fight against bourgeois France on the streets of Paris.

This misgiving had a good reason. Paris was facing civil war and the Commune. On October 8, in accordance with a decision by the Central Committee of 20 Districts, a demonstration was to be organised to force the government to hold elections to the Commune. The government received a deputation from the demonstrators but rejected their demands. The situation became even more strained.

Frightened by the disturbances, the government gradually began to prepare for the capitulation of the city. On October 30 it was decided to resume negotiations with the Germans. In reply to this

new betrayal, on October 31 an uprising burst out on the streets of Paris, in which Vaillant took an active part. Several thousand people gathered in and around the Town Hall demanding a Commune.

The rising was crushed, but its lessons were not in vain. The revolutionaries began to pay great attention to questions of organisation. A "22-man commission" and a Committee of Five were set up in the greatest secrecy. The latter consisted of the Blanquists—Ferré, Sapia, Tridon, Leverdays and Vaillant, who had managed to avoid arrest after the events of October 31.

These bodies met regularly and established contact with several workers' battalions of the National Guard, who promised their support when the revolution broke out. In particular the Committee of Five obtained a promise that at the right moment fire would be directed against the Town Hall.

Together with Tridon, Leverdays and Vallès, Vaillant was entrusted by the Central Committee of 20 Districts with the preparation of the famous *Affiche rouge*, the first of which ended with the words: "Make way for the people! Make way for the Commune!" The appeal accused the government of not having fulfilled its task of organising the defence and of having brought Paris to the brink of disaster. Measures that needed to be taken were listed in the appeal: general requisitioning of foodstuffs, their free distribution and the formation of a people's voluntary corps. Although the *Affiche rouge* did not call directly

for an armed uprising it had a clearly anti-government character.

The government reacted to the *Affiche rouge* with arrests and persecutions. A new uprising flared up in Paris on the 22nd of January 1871, but it too was brutally suppressed. On the 28th of January France signed the capitulation, and a new government, headed by Thiers, was formed on February 17.

Thiers' bourgeois government feared its own people far more than it feared the foreign invaders. Compelled to choose between patriotic duty and class interests, it embarked, without hesitation, on the road of national treachery and tried to disarm the workers of Paris. On the night of March 17 Thiers sent a reinforced detachment of police and several line regiments to Montmartre to take artillery from the National Guard by force. Marx's comment on this ran: "The seizure of her artillery was evidently but to serve as the preliminary to the general disarmament of Paris, and, therefore, of the Revolution of the 4th of September."<sup>4</sup>

However, this plan was unsuccessful. On the 18th of March the uprising that had long been brewing flared up. Thiers and his ministers fled to Versailles. The Central Committee of the National Guard became the provisional government. A week later elections took place in an atmosphere of unprecedented national enthusiasm and on March 28 the Paris Commune was solemnly proclaimed. After the proclamation Vaillant was elected a delegate to the Ministry of the Interior.

Blanquists formed a considerable proportion of the Commune members. They were socialists more by feeling than reason. Explaining the reasons for their aspirations, they appealed to justice but, unlike the Proudhonists, they supported the dictatorship of a revolutionary minority, or even of one man for the purposes of ensuring the victory of the revolution. Engels wrote of them in 1891: "Brought up in the school of conspiracy, and held together by the strict discipline which went with it, they started out from the viewpoint that a relatively small number of resolute, well-organised men would be able, at a given favourable moment, not only to seize the helm of state, but also by a display of great, ruthless energy, to maintain power until they succeeded in sweeping the mass of the people into the revolution and ranging them round the small band of leaders."<sup>5</sup> In the ranks of the Blanquists were men of inexhaustible energy and great courage. Such were the members of the Commune: Vaillant, Duval, Miot, Protot, Ranvier, Rigault, Tridon, Ferré, Flourens, Chardon, Eudes and others.

Vaillant was very active in the Commune and in the Commission for Education which he headed. He had a great deal to attend to. The day was packed to the utmost and night became an extension of the day. He managed to be everywhere. In the morning he would be discussing a new decree in the Commission for Education, during the day his red scarf of a Commune delegate would flash among the faded tunics of the defenders of Paris, in the evening he would attend

a meeting of the Executive Committee, later he would make a passionate speech in the Commune, emphasising it with vigorous gestures, as if there had been no such thing as a long, exhausting day, full of worries and difficulties.

He was not a bit like the former flabby officials from the Ministry of the Interior, who cared about nothing but their own salaries. He was unassuming, sociable—a genuine representative of the victorious people, a true defender of their interests.

Well aware of the obstacles the bourgeois state puts in the way of those of the ordinary people who aspired to an education, Vaillant was one of those who proposed that the Commune should introduce free universal compulsory secular education. This signified a true revolution in the field of public education, and it was no fault of Vaillant's that a great deal of what the Commune planned in this field remained only on paper. History allotted too little time to the Paris Commune, the white terror too swiftly swept the city. In fact, it is surprising how much the Commune did manage to do in the revolutionary transformation of the old society. And one of its outstanding figures, Vaillant, played no small part in this.

He was not afraid to call on the intelligentsia to assist the ordinary workers. On the 23rd of April he published a circular, in which he called upon all who had studied the questions of general education and professional training to share their opinions and plans with the Commission. He so

up a special commission, composed of six members, to organise education. On May 13 he authorised members of the Commune and district delegates to inspect the primary schools, to have religious emblems removed from them and he tried to have their buildings returned to the schools.

The commission which he headed also dealt with theatrical affairs. At a session of the Commune on May 19, emphasising the role of theatres in political enlightenment and general education, Vaillant proposed that they be placed under the jurisdiction of an educational delegation and handed over to their own workers. When debating Vaillant's proposal the Commune acknowledged the need for state control of the arts.

The measures taken in Paris left no doubt about their communist character, and for this reason all the reactionary forces joined in the struggle against the Parisian workers.

The Commune needed an emergency body that would concentrate all power in its own hands. But not all Commune members approved of setting it up: they were afraid of the "dictatorial" powers, and feared a restriction of the commissions' independence. Voting was divided. The majority supported the setting up of such a body, the minority was against. Vaillant voted against the naming of the emergency body as "The Committee of Public Safety", but at the same time supported the decree as a whole, expressing the hope that it would help to implement the essential division of power and ensure a more effective

control over the work of the commissions. The Committee of Public Safety, elected at the Commune session on May 1, was a bloc of proletarian revolutionaries and petty-bourgeois democrats. In this difficult period Vaillant urged the members of the Commune to rally for the sake of saving the revolution.

But the Committee of Public Safety could not save the situation. Separated from the provinces, facing the united ranks of counter-revolutionaries, and lacking support, the Paris Commune was drained of blood. On the morning of May 27 the last battle of the surrounded Communards against the twenty times stronger forces of Versailles, began. The Communards defended their offspring to the last breath, but the forces were unequal.

The Commune held out for 72 days. The Versailles butchers used cannon and guns against the Communards, hoping that in this way they could for ever put an end to any aspirations to freedom on the part of the working people. However, the hopes of the reactionaries that the ideals of socialism would be buried for ever in a communal grave of the Père-Lachaise Cemetery together with the last defenders of the Paris Commune were vain.

The Paris Commune aroused the working masses in other countries; the Commune continued to live and fight.

Lenin's works contain quite a few pages devoted to the Paris Commune. In 1911 Lenin published an article in *Rabochaya gazeta* which



ended with the words: "The cause of the Commune is the cause of the social revolution, the cause of the complete political and economic emancipation of the toilers. It is the cause of the proletariat of the whole world. And in this sense it is immortal." <sup>6</sup>

It would be difficult to overestimate the Paris Commune. It was a bold attempt to destroy the bourgeois state machine, which served the aims of exploiting the working people and to found a state based on service to the people. The Commune abolished the old army and replaced it with a people under arms. In place of the bourgeois officials' bureaucracy, dependent on the money bags, it introduced the system of elections to important positions whose holders would be responsible to their electors and could be removed by them. The Church was separated from the state. The people were given unprecedentedly wide democratic rights and freedoms, and steps were taken towards easing the toil and life of the masses. The Communards aspired to a prototype of a state which was afterwards created in Russia as a result of the socialist revolution.

In the field of international relations the Commune similarly upheld democratic principles, which were in accord with the national and international interests of the French people. On the first day after the uprising the Central Committee of the National Guard declared that it would strictly observe the preliminary conditions of peace with Germany in order to ensure the salva-

tion of republican France and the cause of universal peace. In the declaration of the Communards one can detect rudiments of those noble ideas which rang out most forcefully in the first state document of Soviet power, the Decree on Peace, proclaimed to the whole world in October 1917. A truly national government of France, the Paris Commune at the same time held high the banner of internationalism and the fraternal solidarity of the workers.

The weaknesses, errors and shortcomings of the Paris Commune are explained in the main by the immaturity of the working-class movement of the time, but above all else by the absence of a proletarian political party. In his introduction to the third, jubilee, edition of Marx's *The Civil War in France*, published in 1891, Engels wrote:

"The members of the Commune were divided into a majority, the Blanquists, who had also been predominant in the Central Committee of the National Guard, and a minority, members of the International Working Men's Association, chiefly consisting of adherents of the Proudhon school of socialism. The great majority of the Blanquists were at that time socialists only by revolutionary, proletarian instinct; only a few had attained greater clarity on principles, through Vaillant, who was familiar with German scientific socialism. It is therefore comprehensible that in the economic sphere much was left undone which, according to our view today, the Commune ought to have done. The hardest thing to understand is certainly the holy awe with which they remained

standing respectfully outside the gates of the Bank of France. This was also a serious political mistake. The bank in the hands of the Commune – this would have been worth more than ten thousand hostages. It would have meant the pressure of the whole of the French bourgeoisie on the Versailles government in favour of peace with the Commune. But what is still more wonderful is the correctness of much that nevertheless was done by the Commune, composed as it was of Blanquists and Proudhonists.”<sup>7</sup>

After the defeat of the Communards Vaillant, at the very last moment, hid in a house from which he was able to move to a more reliable refuge on the following morning. Only at the end of June did he get a passport, giving him the opportunity, with the help of one of his friends, to cross the Spanish frontier and from there to reach England via Portugal. In 1872 he was sentenced to death *in absentia*.

He continued his political activities in London. In 1871 he was elected a member of the General Council of the First International, was a delegate to the London Conference (1871) and the Hague Congress of the First International in 1872, and played a leading part among the émigré Blanquists in London.

He was a member of the *Société des réfugiés* and the *Commune révolutionnaire* founded by the Blanquists in London. The members of the *Société* organised a *Comité révolutionnaire central* on their return to France, which soon became the centre of the Blanquist party.

Vaillant returned home after the amnesty in 1880. He lived at first in the department of Cher where he founded a socialist organisation. The Cher department was one of France's industrial centres and it is very much due to Vaillant that socialism struck such deep roots there.

During 1880 he took part in a number of demonstrations, meetings and also in the municipal elections in 1881. He was also to be seen among the workers on strike. After his stay in the Cher department he returned to Paris, where he joined in the work of the Central Revolutionary Committee in alliance with the socialists. After the death of Blanqui in 1881, Vaillant headed the Central Revolutionary Committee of the Blanquists.

In the mid-1880s the revolutionary movement in France began to revive. The socialists led by Jules Guesde were particularly active. He infused fresh blood into the activity of socialist groups: discussions were replaced by socialist propaganda among the workers. Drawing on the experience of the German Social-Democrats, Guesde decided to introduce scientific socialism into the ranks of the proletariat and achieve a merger of the Marxist trend with the spontaneous working-class movement by setting up an independent workers' party.

However, the socialist movement in France remained fragmented. In addition to Guesde's Workers' Party there existed many different groups and trends. They gradually found more and more points of contact, thereby paving the

way for the future unification of all the revolutionary forces in France. Vaillant also well understood the necessity for this step.

Thanks to his great prestige among the toiling masses Vaillant was elected to the Municipal Council of Vierzon and the working-class district of Père-Lachaise in Paris. As a municipal councillor he protested strongly against the colonial expedition to Tunisia in 1881, and conducted an energetic campaign against Ferry's government which had organised it. He spoke on this question both in Paris and his home constituency of Vierzon. To applause and cries of "Long live the Commune!" he told them that never before had there been such a swindling parliament as that of the 16th of May, and that the country should demand that the deputies do their duty.

In the 1880s Vaillant worked on the editorial staff of the socialist newspapers *L'Homme libéré*, and *Cri du peuple*. He strongly opposed the criminal activities of the Panama Canal Company and those French officials connected with it. The collapse of the company ruined thousands of small shareholders and caused many bankruptcies. Vaillant wrote that it was just one more usual episode in the capitalist plundering of the nation's property and a consequence of the robbery of the working class by the ruling class.

His consistent tactics and untiring defence of workers' interests won him the sympathy and trust of the voters and in 1893 Vaillant was

elected to the Chamber of Deputies. He fought vigorously against Millerand, who in the 1890s sided with the Socialists and headed an opportunist trend in the French socialist movement. In 1899 Millerand joined Waldeck-Rousseau's reactionary bourgeois government in which he collaborated with General Galliffet, the butcher of the Paris Commune. After his expulsion from the Socialist Party in 1904 Millerand founded, together with other former Socialists, a party of "independent socialists" and from 1909 to 1915 occupied various ministerial posts.

In the elections in 1897 Vaillant was returned unopposed. Displaying constant care for the toiling masses he submitted to the Paris Municipal Council a number of plans and proposals for improving their living and working conditions, several of which were adopted. He put forward a draft of labour legislation, the main points of which were an eight-hour working day, a forty-eight-hour working week, a ban on child labour, a reduction of the working hours of women and juveniles, a ban on hazardous occupations, the introduction of sanitary regulations, the setting up of accident insurance, old age, disability and sickness funds, setting up of commissions of workers to supervise workshops and the establishment of an international bureau for collecting statistics and drawing up draft laws.

To ease the hard lot of the unemployed Vaillant led a campaign for the establishment of funds to help needy workers, regulation of working conditions and the introduction of a guaran

teed minimum wage. Thanks to the efforts of Vaillant and his supporters the Municipal Council of Paris contributed 10,000 francs to the striking miners in Decazeville. He demanded that the Council propose to the government that it should take the Decazeville mines from the joint stock company and hand over their management to workers' unions. He proposed similar measures in relation to all mines, railways and canals.

Later he proposed the disbandment of the standing army and its replacement by a people's militia, for which children could prepare themselves by gymnastics and military exercises. He also proposed the setting up of dining-rooms in schools, and giving them an annual subsidy by the city of several hundred thousand francs. In these dining-rooms the children of poor parents would be given a free dinner, those whose parents were better off could have it for a modest sum.

Vaillant's activity in the Municipal Council shows his conscious and consistent struggle for the interests of the toiling masses. As a deputy he had frequent meetings with his constituents and, in addition to all this, he found time for serious work on sociological questions and to follow the development of the working-class movement in other countries. In a number of his works he writes about the necessity for regulating production and helping the unemployed. However, not being a Marxist, he could not propose decisive measures for ending crises—the removal of the capitalist mode of production. His proposals

reduced to the adoption of a labour protection law and state regulation of labour.

He contributed a great deal to the development and strengthening of the socialist movement in France at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries. He actively prepared the ground for the reconciliation of the Guesdists and other socialist groups, and this work bore fruit. The Socialist Party of France was formed in 1901. On the basis of a merger of the Guesdist National Council and the Central Revolutionary Committee of Vaillant's Supporters, the Central Council of the new party was formed to manage the party affairs between congresses. The party devoted a great deal of attention to the development of a press for spreading socialist ideas in the working-class movement, and by the end of 1904 it controlled 22 newspapers. Vaillant's supporters introduced a fighting spirit into the new party, the knowledge of how to establish contact with the toiling masses, and the experience of effective use of republican establishments and institutions.

The French Socialist Party was formed in 1902 on the basis of numerous socialist organisations. In accordance with the rules adopted on the suggestion by Jean Jaurès at the congress in Tours socialism was proclaimed an essential addition to the "Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen". As distinct from the Socialist Party of France, this party was clearly reformist and did not hide the fact.

The concentration of numerous isolated socialist organisations and trends into two parties was



a great step forward in uniting the revolutionary movement, and helped to create a united front on many vital questions.

A group of revolutionary Socialist deputies, particularly Vaillant's supporters, who had accumulated vast experience in these matters, fought actively for the interests of the workers. According to its Rules, the deputies belonging to the Socialist Party of France had to strive to achieve any reforms that would improve the working class' living conditions.

There were quite a few questions in political activity on which both parties held similar views, and more and more party activists came to the conclusion that disagreements between socialists could bring nothing but harm. The bourgeoisie skilfully employed the absence of unity among the socialists to its own advantage. The situation in France more and more clearly convinced them of the need to unite all the left forces to activate the struggle against capital.

The decision of the Amsterdam Congress of the Second International (August 1904), which discussed the question "On International Rules of Socialist Tactics", gave a strong push towards union. After heated arguments and debates the congress unanimously adopted a resolution on the unity of the socialist movement, and this cleared the way for unification. The two "opposing" socialist parties in France, being sections of one and the same international party, were obliged to obey its decision and unite.

A few days after the congress the Executive

Commission of the Socialist Party of France announced that it was ready to carry out its duty and immediately achieve unity on the basis of the principles determined by international congresses. At the end of 1904 a joint commission for unification was set up which prepared a charter of the unity. It stated the adoption by Jaurès' party of a number of fundamental principles adhered to by the party of Guesde, Vaillant and others. In April 1905 a unity congress took place at which the United French Socialist Party was formed. Thus the long process of uniting all the socialist forces in France came to an end. Vaillant, Guesde and Jaurès played an important part in this.

Vaillant was one of the active leaders of the new party. Together with Guesde, Longuet and Jaurès he took part in the sittings of the International Socialist Bureau in Brussels.

From 1905 to 1907 large-scale demonstrations and meetings of solidarity with the first Russian revolution were held in France. Like Jaurès, Vaillant welcomed the action of Russian workers. He also struggled fiercely against the colonial policy of French ruling circles, against the threat of war and against militarism. In his pamphlet "Suppression de l'armée permanente et des conseils de guerre" he wrote that militarism guards the privileges of capitalists and as long as the capitalist system exists wars will not cease.

In 1914 Vaillant adopted a social chauvinistic position, calling on Socialists to do their duty as soldiers to the last "for France, for the republic, for mankind!" In spite of his errors, to the end of

his days Vaillant carried on an unceasing struggle against capitalist exploitation, for the interests of the working people, proposing many reforms and measures to improve the hard lot of the workers.

On the 18th of December, 1915, this leader of the French revolutionary movement and active fighter in the Paris Commune died at the age of 75.



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**Charles Fourier**  
**1772–1837**

## AN AXIOM OF SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY

Charles Fourier saw the organist in the organ loft throw back his pensive head and lower his sensitive fingers on to the keyboard. Powerful sounds at once poured forth into the semidarkness of the church, enthralling the boy's whole being. Tears filled his eyes. His father bent over, breathing hotly over him and hurriedly whispered: "Honour your parents, don't tell lies, don't be deceitful, always speak the truth. That's what Holy Scripture tells".

After mass they went to the shop and it was as though there had never been any passionate sermons or his father's admonishing whispering. Everything turned out quite the opposite. The shop assistants were palming off low-quality goods onto the customers, overcharging them, and the owner of the shop, Fourier the senior, only nodded his head and gave a slight approving cough. The parents, seeing that the boy had a taste for the truth, reproached him, saying: "The child is no good for business."

Monsieur and Madame Fourier had no idea just how right they were. At the age of seven Charles vowed eternal hatred of trading and remained true to his vow to the end of his life. True, circumstances obliged him to stand behind a counter for quite a long time or to sit at a writing-desk, totting up figures of income and expenditures. But in the whole of France there was no one who so hated this occupation as he did, and who tried so much, first in dreams and then in his writings, to overthrow it.

When he was ten Charles was sent to the Jesuit College in Besançon, where he was one of the best pupils, constantly receiving prizes as he progressed from class to class. He was particularly fond of geography. A rich imagination transported the youth to various countries, and his last pennies were spent on geographical atlases and maps.

After leaving college Fourier, against the wishes of his mother who dreamed of making her son a businessman, tried to enter the engineering college, but, alas, the intention was not fulfilled. Feudal France, the France of the privileged classes, taught this upstart from the third estate, Charles Fourier, a stern lesson in social injustice—the college admitted only children of the nobility.

So Charles had to work in a commercial house, first in Rouen and then in Lyons. But there were also bright moments in his life, when he read books, saw new towns and countries that he visited as a commercial traveller. Soon, with the

inheritance from his father, he opened his own business in Lyons, trading in colonial goods.

At the end of the 18th century Lyons was second only to Paris as a commercial and industrial city, and it was here, in conditions of developed capitalist relations, that Fourier's communist outlook was formed.

The Revolution of 1789 dealt a painful blow to the interests of the bourgeoisie in this once flourishing city. They felt particularly frustrated during the Jacobin dictatorship: the decline of trade, strict laws, forbidding speculation, compulsory interest-free loans from the wealthy merchants—all turned the propertied sections of the city's population against the Convention. On the 29th of May, 1793, the Girondists in Lyons rebelled, the power of the Jacobins was overthrown and the mayor of the Lyons commune was executed. Fourier was involuntarily involved in these stormy events, being called up into the rebel army. In order to put down the counter-revolution in Lyons the Convention sent there its most prominent members—Couthon, Collot d'Herbois, Fouché and others. The rebels couldn't hold out for long and the city capitulated.

Fourier was arrested but he managed to escape punishment and decided to go home to Besançon, where he was again arrested. On his release he was called up for military service where he gained the reputation of a staunch and courageous defender of revolutionary France. He conceived a clever plan for the movement of troops across the Rhine and the Alps, for which he was

thanked by General Carnot. He was discharged from military service in 1796 because of ill health, and once again took up the hateful commercial business.

He witnessed the climb to political power of a new social force, the bourgeoisie, who, with the help of the heroic efforts of the working people, had overthrown the feudal system in France, and came to the conclusion that the bourgeois system, praised by philosophers and economists, was in glaring contradiction to the aims of human existence.

Life itself confirmed Fourier's observations. While he was a salesman in Marseilles he was ordered by his employer to throw some 1,000 tons of rice into the sea. It was spoiled through being kept too long in the hope of a rise in price. Similar examples showed quite clearly that enormous amounts of the fruits of man's labour served the merchants as a means of criminal speculation. He also witnessed how production became more expensive as a result of artificial rises of price for raw materials, goods and agricultural produce. Free competition, which turned people into a herd of animals aroused his indignation.

Finding no satisfaction in the world around him, Fourier began to ponder over the causes of all the existing evils and ways of saving mankind. By the time he reached his thirties Fourier had decided that he had been born to become a social reformer.

Fourier's plan for social reforms is bound up with two incidents in his life: the throwing away



of rice in Marseilles, and a dinner in a Paris restaurant where he was served an apple for which he had to pay almost a hundred times as much as it cost in Normandy. Both cases convinced him of the imperfection of the industrial mechanism of the bourgeois system. Later on Fourier used to say that he, exactly like Newton, discovered the idea of "association" thanks to an apple.

Naturally, these somewhat naive reasonings can only cause a smile. It is not a matter of an apple, although it may, of course, have "illuminated" the thinker. The whole social and economic structure of capitalism, imperiously invading every corner of France, a structure that recognised nothing but wealth, that was destroying everything for the sake of money, could not but revolt a man who from childhood had never accepted evil, deceit or profiteering. Himself unaware of it, he was moving towards social reformation.

Fourier set out his first two plans for social reforms in two works: "L'Harmonie universelle" (Universal Harmony), and *Théorie des quatre mouvements et des destinées générales* (The Theory of Four Movements and General Destinies).

"L'Harmonie universelle", a short article of only 56 lines, appeared in December 1803. Its readers, well-to-do and judicious people, became once more convinced that Monsieur Fourier was an unworldly man. The article talked about some sort of mathematical theory on the destinies of all the planets and their inhabitants. The author maintained that mankind must pass through three stages of development: savagery, barbarity and

civilisation, before achieving that Harmony in which will come universal happiness and prosperity, and the whole world will consist of a single nation under one single government. Bourgeois limitations prevented the discreet citizens from understanding Fourier's work. Moreover, the arrogant tone of the article grated on the readers. It did not occur to them that the fundamental principles of Fourier's future social philosophy were set out in it.

The mockery and misunderstandings aroused by the article only stimulated Fourier's desire to inform the world of his discoveries. But he felt that he must bring order into his views, systematise them. But articles were of no use; what was needed were detailed books and pamphlets, in which the idea would not be constricted by narrow limits. So he set to work. His detailed *Théorie des quatre mouvements et des destinées générales* appeared in 1808.

In this work Fourier criticised the vices of bourgeois society. He exposed the repulsive features of capitalist trade, marriage, "free love" and education. Unfortunately, his ideas were set forth rather awkwardly, and abounded in complicated calculations and references to the laws of "four movements" which he had discovered. Nevertheless, this work became the first missile launched against capitalism. However, in a society where the spirit of enterprise and profit reigned supreme, there was no demand for the book. Even in Paris it lay undisturbed for years on the shelves of bookstores. But this didn't lessen his

enthusiasm and he continued to work on the development of his ideas.

From 1816 to 1822 he lived in the countryside, not far from Lyons, and he gained some followers. In 1822 he published his *Traité de l'association domestique et agricole* (Treatise on a Domestic and Agricultural Association), which appeared in posthumous editions of his collected works under the title *Théorie de l'unité universelle* (A Theory of Universal Unity). In the *Traité* there are sections and chapters devoted to his philosophical and sociological views, and a great deal of attention is paid to social criticism, and, in particular, to a description of the harmonious society.

In contrast to *Théorie des quatre mouvements* Fourier did not limit himself to separate digressions but described in detail the way of life of the work collectives. He tried to work out in detail the structure of primary work cells, which he called phalanges, or phalanxes. The public buildings intended for the accommodation, work and leisure of the members of the phalanxes he called phalansteries. He hoped that experimental phalanxes could be set up at once, even without any change in the entire social system.

Fourier religiously believed that some great or rich man would eventually implement his system. He approached all the outstanding figures and millionaires of Europe in turn and many kings, too; his naivety was so great that he even announced in the papers that he would be at home every day from noon to one o'clock to

receive those wishing to contribute their funds to the creation of a phalanx. But he waited in vain for many years.

Since no millionaires appeared, Fourier again had to earn his living by serving in offices in Paris and Lyons. True, in 1828 he managed to free himself for a time from the hateful slavery, thanks to the financial support of friends and followers. This enabled him to finish his book *Le nouveau monde industriel et societaire* (The New Industrial and Social World) which was published at the expense of one of his pupils. It is his best work. In the quarter-century of his literary work capitalism had provided him with a great amount of new material for criticism. At the same time he was developing his ideas on the future of society, and he set them out in a more popular way, cleansed of mysticism. Bebel called this book the quintessence of Fourier's philosophy.

Fourier gave a subtitle to his book, calling it "Invention du procédé d'industrie attrayante et naturelle distribuée en séries passionnées". At the beginning of the book he stated what the result of his discovery would give to mankind: a means of multiplying the real income by four and the relative income by twenty, the emancipation of negroes and slaves, arranged with the master universal achievements in the field of agriculture and the mastery of good manners; moreover a common language, monetary and weights and measures systems, etc., would be established throughout the world. Then he went on to describe in detail what, in his opinion, the new, just

er social system, the phalanx, should be. In spite of its tempting promises the new book was met with complete indifference. There were not even any satirical articles hinting at the mental state of the author, such as had appeared earlier in response to *Théorie des quatre mouvements*. There was silence, a conspiracy of silence.

At the end of the 1820s Fourier moved to Paris where a group of followers gradually gathered round him, the most outstanding and zealous of them being Victor Considérant, who later became a parliamentary deputy. In 1832 the Fourierists attempted to set up an experimental phalanx and began to collect subscriptions, but the thing was a failure. Then Fourier, with the help of his pupils founded a magazine *La réforme industrielle*, but it only existed for one year.

Broken by failures, not understood to the end even by his own pupils and followers, Fourier, nevertheless, continued to work intensively, pedantically fulfilling his daily writing plan. The result of his efforts was the book *La fausse industrie morcelée* (False Industry) and a series of articles in which he examined a broad range of social and economic problems. Although his health was failing he worked with great creative energy as he had always done.

He was a kind, but somewhat strange person. He was a bachelor and lived alone. In his relationships with people he was always simple and polite. A pleasant and quick-witted conversationalist, he knew how to surprise people and make them laugh, while himself remaining com-

pletely serious. He was pedantically accurate and punctual in everything and liked to measure and calculate everything. Constantly engrossed in thought he was extremely absent-minded. He was very rarely seen to laugh; his face always wore a thoughtful expression. It was the face of a thinker and dreamer.

He firmly believed in his special mission. In a poem he wrote at the beginning of the 1830s he foretold that a future generation would move his ashes to the Pantheon.

On the 10th of October, 1837, the concierge found him dead in his modestly furnished room. A few friends and pupils buried him in the Montmartre cemetery.

No tomb was set up over his grave, but on a simple stone the following words were engraved:

Here lie the remains of  
Charles Fourier

Fourier's life was devoted to the exposure of the capitalist system, which is full of social contradictions. His work was permeated with humanistic pathos, with the desire to find and establish an order that would guarantee work, means of subsistence and well-being for the have-nots. He spoke out boldly against the bourgeois system.

In Fourier's opinion mankind, through great suffering, had reached a level of industrial development in the period of civilisation at which it was possible to achieve harmony; meanwhile,

people's living conditions did not improve but worsened. He vividly described the conditions in the so-called civilised societies with their lack of organisation, their poverty and the huge number of wealthy, living at the expense of the working people.

The founders of Marxism valued Fourier's works highly. Acknowledging that in some respects they are inferior to the works of Saint-Simon and some of his followers, Engels wrote that nevertheless Fourier had "something not to be found among the Saint-Simonists—scientific research, cool, unbiassed, systematic thought; in short, *social philosophy*".<sup>1</sup> He highly appraised Fourier's pronouncements concerning the dialectically natural transition of society from a lower to a higher state, and emphasised that Fourier, like Hegel, was a master of dialectics.

"But Fourier is at his greatest", commented Engels, "in his conception of the history of society. He divides its whole course, thus far, into four stages of evolution—savagery, the patriarchate, barbarism, civilisation. This last is identical with the so-called bourgeois society of today."<sup>2</sup>

In their works Marx and Engels pointed to the merits and shortcomings of some of Fourier's propositions. Marx showed that Fourier proceeded from the teachings of the French materialists. This relates, above all, to two ideas which underlie his philosophy. Firstly, to the idea of world-wide unity. He argued that there is a unity in the motion of the material and the spiritual worlds. Secondly, to the idea of general conform-

ity with a law. Fourier stresses the unity of the universe and its parts, the unity of Nature and human society; and both Nature and human society are subject to the same general laws which man, as a rational being, must discover. Motion lies at the base of both Nature and society. The great Newton formulated the law of gravity in the 17th century, discovered the law-governed nature of material motion; Fourier, as he himself supposed, discovered the laws of motion of human society, the laws governing the social world.

Basing himself on the idea of unity and the conformity of Nature and Man with general laws, Fourier came to the conclusion that human passions are a manifestation of the prevailing general law of gravity and attraction of matter. Consequently, attraction through passion, inherent in man, governs the social world. According to Fourier, to discover these passions, describe and classify them, is the only way to the re-organisation of social relations and the building of a new social system which will know nothing of the calamities of contemporary society. Moreover, God has not given all these passions to man by chance, but according to a definite plan, and this must be taken into account in attempts at radical re-organisation of social relations.

For all the obscurities and naivety of such reasoning, Fourier succeeded in noting a number of basic regularities of capitalism and discovering the tendencies of its development. Thus one meets in his works penetrating observations on the process of concentration, which leads inevitably to



monopoly and to the deepening of the chasm separating the rich from the poor; on crises and their connection with the general disorganisation of the system; and on the growth of social antagonisms. He saw quite clearly the illusory nature of social progress under capitalism, the irresistible lowering of the people's living standards.

Fourier showed that the bourgeois system brings with it disorder, anarchy and wars, fosters the growth of crime, and the more it develops and moves towards its decline, the more repulsive it becomes. He saw signs of the decay of contemporary civilisation and its vices primarily in the prevailing disorder and anarchy. With precise strokes he depicted the speculative tricks and the narrow-mindedness characteristic of French commerce, satirically portrayed the relations between the sexes in bourgeois society and the position of women in it. He was the first to put forward the idea that the degree of freedom attained by a given society, should be measured by the greater or lesser degree of freedom accorded to women in that society.

He described capitalist society as a "world inside out". Revealing the antagonism between capitalist industry and agriculture he exposed the exploitative nature of large-scale manorial farming and the senselessness of small-scale farming.

He showed that with the development of capitalism the chasm between wealth and poverty increases, and, as a result, in countries where industry is flourishing there are more destitute than in less developed countries. Fourier thus

anticipates the general law of capitalist accumulation discovered by Marx.

The Utopian Fourier rendered a great service by his assertion that capitalism, because of the domination of private property and the existence of a huge army of the unemployed, deprives the working people of their right to work. He gave a vivid description of the terrible, oppressive poverty of the workless. He rose to the heights of dialectical interpretation of social reality, and came to the conclusion that it was essential to do away with capitalism completely, together with its vicious social organisation, which could never be improved by half-measures.

Fourier clearly saw the class stratification of society and endeavoured to prove that the poor were deprived of political and social freedom. However, he did not realise that it is precisely the class struggle that is the basic motive force of history. Like Saint-Simon, Fourier lumped together the employers and their hired hands, regarding them as the working class. Hence his naive faith in the possibility of a peaceful transformation of society through reason, and, in particular, through the acceptance of his teaching by the powers that be.

In this way, correctly rejecting the crudely levelling "socialism of poverty", he mistakenly supposed it possible to preserve social classes and unearned incomes in the future society. He considered labour, capital and talent to be the productive elements determining the progress of society. He was unable to reveal the depth of the

antagonism between labour and capital in the field of production. His attention was to a greater extent directed towards commercial and usurious, rather than to industrial capital.

However, it must not be forgotten that many of this remarkable thinker's mistakes were due to the undeveloped state of capitalist relations, from the fact that he still could not quite see the abyss that separates the worker and the capitalist. Fourier not only castigates the economic sores of capitalism, but also its politics, morals, culture and educational system. He criticised the institution of bourgeois marriage, which had degenerated into a commercial deal. Marx and Engels highly appraised this bold, uncompromising criticism in the work *The Holy Family*.

Although not a materialist Fourier nevertheless showed that state power, science, morality, philosophy and religion serve the interests of the rich, the ruling classes. He speaks ironically of bourgeois constitutions, stressing that they promise the poor only illusory, ephemeral rights, refusing them the most vital: a crust of bread.

He criticised in masterly fashion the slogan proclaimed by the bourgeoisie, particularly popular in France at that time: "Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité". He pointed out that the whole of the poor class of society, forced to enslave itself with hired labour, is completely denied either political or social freedom. In such circumstances it is quite wrong to speak of the existence of social freedom in a bourgeois society. Such a conclusion draws a dividing line between Fourier and his

predecessors, the 18th-century philosophers. He criticised sharply and in an original way all aspects of bourgeois civilisation. He pictures capitalism as a social system burdened with internal contradictions. Engels wrote: "Fourier ... provides the proof that ... existing society can be seen to be thoroughly reprehensible, and that by criticism of the bourgeoisie alone, namely of the bourgeoisie in its inner relationships, apart from its attitude to the proletariat—one can arrive at the necessity of a social reconstruction. For this aspect of criticism, Fourier up to now remains unique." <sup>3</sup>

Fourier's criticism was merciless and uncompromising, and it is just this uncompromisingness that enabled Marx and Engels to call Fourier, along with Saint-Simon and Owen, one of those socialist thinkers who "... were, in many respects, revolutionary".<sup>4</sup>

Fourier remained a Utopian all his life. He approached the rulers and supposed that philanthropists could be found who would be able to lay the foundations for an association which would then spread spontaneously throughout the world. Criticising capitalism, exposing the vices and contradictions of bourgeois society, Fourier was nevertheless unable to discover the regularity of all the phenomena under capitalism and scientifically substantiate them, or to explain the causes of exploitation and how to end it. "When feudalism was overthrown and 'free' capitalist society appeared in the world," wrote Lenin, "it at once became apparent that this freedom meant

a new system of oppression and exploitation of the working people. Various socialist doctrines immediately emerged as a reflection of and protest against this oppression. Early socialism, however, was *utopian* socialism. It criticised capitalist society, it condemned and damned it, it dreamed of its destruction, it had visions of a better order and endeavoured to convince the rich of the immorality of exploitation.

“But utopian socialism could not indicate the real solution. It could not explain the real nature of wage-slavery under capitalism, it could not reveal the laws of capitalist development, or show what *social force* is capable of becoming the creator of a new society.”<sup>5</sup>

Thus Lenin graphically described the basic features of Utopian socialism of which Fourier was a representative.

Until the end of his life Fourier worked intensively on his plans for social reforms. At the base of his new, socialist society was the association, a production collective. All its members were to be engaged primarily in agriculture and to be in friendly relationship to one another. He called such a collective, consisting of 1,500 to 1,600 people, a phalanx.

A phalanx was an association of producers, that is, a special organisation, formed on the principle of conformity of personal and social interests, in which individual members may rationally apply their abilities and enthusiasms to the advantage both of themselves and society. The members of these collectives were to be

divided into groups and series performing various kinds of work. The members of the association were not bound to work in a particular series or group. Entry into groups was voluntary and therefore participation satisfies the effective passions (each member selects his comrades according to his own tastes).

The productivity of labour in the phalanx enables the poorest of its members to satisfy their material needs more fully than any capitalist in civilisation. To manage the affairs of the phalanx an areopagus was formed which issued no orders or rules but only advised on the basis of its members' experience and scientific data. The change over to the system of harmony must be effected as a result of peaceful propaganda, of the organisation of model phalanxes, which by their example would attract all mankind.

The phalanx, the land, all the equipment and building materials were to be set up, produced and bought for money, collected through the sale of shares. The income of the phalanx was to be shared out not just according to labour but also according to the amount of capital contributed. The income was to be divided into twelve parts: five would go to labour, three to talent and four to capital. Fourier thought that in time the rich, being drawn into social labour, would become just such producers as the former poor; the poor themselves would also be able to buy shares and would in consequence begin to receive an income from capital as well as from their labour. In this naive way Fourier hoped to reconcile the classes.

The association would gradually eradicate all social ills and establish complete harmony. In a phalanx everything would be in common and there would be an abundance of everything. Even the poorest member would enjoy all the benefits, travel about in luxurious carriages and five times a day would receive a meal consisting of forty dishes.

Every phalanx would have a magnificent palace with living accommodation for its members and their families, with halls for lectures, balls and concerts, with a library, and observatory, winter gardens with glassed-in galleries and so on. Everything would be arranged comfortably and elegantly. The phalanxes would achieve enormous economy in comparison with the waste of strength and means in conditions of capitalist anarchy. Engels stressed that one of Fourier's virtues is that he showed the advantages of association in the organisation of human activity.

In his works Fourier devoted a great deal of attention to the organisation of labour. It must take into account such characteristics of people as the striving for competition, variety and creativity. Making the first steps in the elaboration of the principles of scientific communism, Engels wrote that Fourier's ideas on labour were a great contribution to the theory of the future society. Warning against the mistakes of the Utopian socialists Marx wrote: "But if we have no right to reject these patriarchs of socialism, just as the chemists have no right to reject their fathers, the alchemists, we must at least avoid repeating their

mistakes, which, if committed by us would be inexcusable.”<sup>6</sup> Many mistakes of Fourier and other Utopian socialists can be explained not by their lack of perspicacity but by the historical conditions of their time.

It is almost a century and a half since the great idea of emancipated labour was expressed, the labour of each for the general good of society, but it still sounds contemporary. Today there are tens of millions of the unemployed in capitalist countries. Fourier was absolutely right when he said that without the right to work all the other gifts of capitalist civilisation were nothing, that only a new, socialist society could guarantee the workers the fulfilment of all their socio-economic and political rights.





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**Jean Jaurès**  
**1859 – 1914**

## THE JOY OF LIFE AND STRUGGLE

In his reminiscences of Jean Jaurès, a prominent figure in the French and international socialist movements, a consistent fighter against militarism and war, Romain Rolland wrote: "The fever of political passions boiling up in the arteries of France in those days inspired me with an interest in the spectacles of the Forum. I began diligently visiting the most important sittings of Parliament. Jean Jaurès appeared in the resplendent aureole of initial success: he led his forces, the socialist party—disciplined, vigilant, full of joie de vivre, confident of victory—into the attack. Big, strong, with the appearance and manners of a man of the people, bearded and red-cheeked, with large fleshy features, carelessly dressed and radiating joie de vivre and the joy of struggle."

August-Marie-Joseph-Jean Jaurès was born on September 3, 1859, to a bourgeois family in the small town of Castres, Tarn department. His childhood years were spent in the countryside; he was an industrious, inquisitive boy. His kind, lov-

ing mother had a great influence on him. The modest family income did not allow him to enter one of the privileged educational establishments and he found himself in one of the poorest boarding schools in the department. In 1869 he managed to enter college, with the money provided by his relatives. Both in the boarding school and the college he was counted among the best students, receiving the highest awards for his studies.

In 1876 the General Inspector from the Ministry of Education took an interest in the gifted youth and persuaded him not to enter a competition for a post in the postal department, where his mother intended him to go, but instead helped him to get into the Collège Sainte-Barbe in Paris. The two years spent in the collège had a great influence on Jaurès. He studied the culture of the ancient world, philosophy and literature. In 1878 he entered an open competition for secondary school leavers in Paris and Versailles and won first prize. This opened for him the doors of one of the most privileged educational establishments in France, the École normale in Paris, where some of the most famous professors taught. During his years in the École normale Jaurès came to believe in his talent as an orator and began to develop and polish it. He visited Parliament to listen to Gambetta, Clemenceau and Buffet, and achieved noticeable success in the art of oratory.

In 1881 he finished the École normale and began to teach philosophy, first in the lycée in

Albi and then in the university of Toulouse. At the same time he continued to improve his own education. His knowledge in different fields of science, culture and politics became truly encyclopaedic, and his speech—convincing, erudite and vivid. He knew Latin, Greek, German, English, Italian and Spanish equally well. The subject of his dissertation was “De la réalité du monde sensible” (On the Reality of the Sensible World).

It was at this time that he began his social activities, at first in the form of modest comments in the republican paper *Depêche de Toulouse*, then in the election campaign in Castres on the side of the moderate republicans.

He devoted his irrepressible temperament and enormous talent to the defence of the republic. Naturally, the struggle against the schemes of the reactionaries, terrified by the Paris Commune, was a progressive cause, but the young politician did not yet realise what kind of republic he was defending.

In 1885, already widely known, Jaurès was nominated a republican candidate for Parliament. The pre-election campaign was brilliant. The candidate spoke of the need to recognise trade unions, of widening the self-government of the communes and of improving the material conditions of the workers. He was quite sincere in his promises, not realising that for the leaders of the bourgeois republican party all these slogans were just a usual manoeuvre in the keen pre-election fight. Even the republicans' demand to make the col-

onisation policy more active he somewhat naively interpreted as spreading French cultural influence, and not as an urge to seize new markets.

The election results were impressive. Jaurès received more votes than any other republican candidate and outstripped the conservative party candidate. This really was victory! But in the other departments the republicans were defeated in the first round of elections. The danger of losing seats caused the republicans to unite and the second round brought them victory. The new Chamber had 372 republicans of various trends, and 202 monarchists. But the situation, as before, continued to be unstable. The republicans did not have a majority but were divided into various trends, each of which upheld its own stand.

Jaurès, young in both years and experience, did not miss a single session. He closely followed Georges Clemenceau, the leader of the radicals, had talks with the republican Jules Ferry, listened attentively to the speeches of the socialist deputies, voted for funds for the maintenance of religious cults, for the allocation of funds to send an expeditionary corps to Tonkin, and voted against an amnesty for political offences.

In October 1886 he made his maiden speech in Parliament on the question of the rights of local authorities in the field of primary education. In his second speech, in March 1887, he opposed the introduction of customs duties on imported grain, which would lead to an increase in the price of grain on the domestic market. He exposed the in-

tention of the big landowners to enrich themselves at the expense of the small proprietor and the workers.

The resolution he proposed, which in many respects was similar to that of the socialists, was rejected. Nevertheless, Jaurès' popularity continued to grow. His voice was heard more and more often in debates on bills which would improve the conditions of the working masses. He spoke in favour of allocating funds for educational workers, proposed setting up a pension fund from compulsory contributions from employers and workers, insisted on the adoption of a law providing compensation for victims of industrial accidents and of social laws for the benefit of miners. His proposals were usually rejected by the reactionary majority.

At this time there was nothing socialist in either his activities or his views. He acted at first as a bourgeois-radical and then as a democrat. But it was precisely this true democratism of Jaurès, which had nothing in common with the democratism of Clemenceau or Ferry, that led him into the socialist camp. He became convinced that the actions of the republicans were at variance with their splendid promises. This was not a matter of individual persons, nor of leaders, nor circumstances but the very essence of the party which was protecting the interests of the big property owners. It became clear to the budding political leader that true democratism was bound up with the working-class movement.

Events connected with the struggle against Bou-

langer and his supporters strongly influenced the formation of Jaurès' socialist views.

Boulanger was the Minister of War in 1886-1887. He had acquired a reputation as a fervent republican, won the favour of the army, and his name had become one of the most popular in France. But it very soon became clear that the mixed company, united round Boulanger, was hatching plans that presented a threat to democracy. The Boulangists even talked of revolution. However, it all ended uncommonly "peacefully": frightened by rumours of early arrest, the would-be dictator fled to Belgium and soon afterwards shot himself.

Jaurès became convinced that as long as society was based on private ownership political life would reflect capitalist morality, preach political adventurism and give birth to people like Boulanger. He first began to speak of the need to change the social system on the pages of the *Depêche de Toulouse*. At the end of the 1880s he returned to Toulouse where he taught in the university, studied the history of German socialism and works of Louis Blanc, Proudhon, Jules Guesde, Paul Lafargue, Ferdinand Lassalle and Benoît Malon.

This period marked a turning point in his socialist world outlook. Works of Karl Marx exerted a great influence on Jaurès.

He first mentioned Marx in 1890, in an article which he wrote on German socialism. He was familiar with Marx's *Capital* and stressed its depth and the soundness of its theoretical founda-

tions, and paid tribute to Marx's critique of capitalism. But Jaurès' socialism was a moral ideal, a result of the development of republican democracy, and not a result of the acute class struggle or the objective course of history.

In July 1890 Jaurès was elected a municipal councillor and later deputy mayor of Toulouse. Then in 1893 the socialists nominated him their candidate from Carmaux in the by-election to the Chamber of Deputies, in which he was successful.

Carmaux was an important period in his life, because it was precisely his contact with the workers, who had elected him, that strengthened his socialist convictions which until then had had a somewhat abstract character. Jaurès sensed this change in himself: his speeches, which had previously been made for a *recherché* public in Parliament, became simpler and more easily understood. And every speech he made found a response in the hearts of the workers of Carmaux, because their deputy, Professor of Philosophy Jean Jaurès, now knew what the workers in the city were dreaming of and struggling for.

The start of Jaurès' parliamentary activity coincided with the scandalous Panama affair. The sale of shares in the Panama Canal Company had yielded a sum of 1,400 million francs, of which about 700 million had gone on construction work. Investigation disclosed that the rest had been pocketed by smart dealers and that parliamentary permission for the issue of shares had been given as the result of the bribery of



a number of deputies, politicians and the editors of a number of bourgeois newspapers. In his speeches Jaurès stigmatised the venal deputies, revealed the corrupting influence of the power of money and the social roots of the Panama venture, emphasising that this phenomenon was inherent in the very nature of bourgeois society.

At the beginning of the 1890s the anarchists became more active in France. Shots and explosions rang out on the streets. The President of the Republic, Sadi Carnot, was assassinated. The reactionaries, taking advantage of the confusion and fright which had seized the petty-bourgeois section of the population, installed Casimir Périer, well known for his Rightist views, as president. The new president continued what he had begun as head of the government: laws appeared one after another restricting the democratic freedoms proclaimed by the Constitution. Democratic France was indignant. And in the general chorus of voices raised against the anti-democratic laws Jaurès' passionate appeal rang out loudly.

He never missed a single opportunity to come to grips with the reactionaries. Parliament shook at his castigating speeches: he spoke in defence of Gerault-Richard, accused of insulting the president. The speech of the defence became a prosecutor's speech: Jaurès painted the unsavoury picture of the origin of Périer's fortune, acquired through his own and through his forefathers' usury and swindling. As a result of protests by democratic Frenchmen the president was obliged

to resign, an event in which Jaurès played no small part.

Nor could Jaurès stand aloof from the notorious Dreyfus case. Dreyfus was an officer on the French General Staff who was accused of spying for Germany. This was a period when the reactionaries were making use of anti-semitic feeling as a weapon against the republic, therefore all the progressive forces which came out in defence of Dreyfus opposed reaction and upheld democratic freedoms. The innocent man was sentenced to penal servitude for life. Jaurès studied the Dreyfus case and in his speeches exposed the manoeuvres of the Right and criticised the indeterminate position of the government. With his characteristic forthrightness he emphasised that it was in the interest of the proletariat to protest against the illegalities uncovered in the Dreyfus case.

Gradually he became the most prominent figure in the French socialist movement. Having studied Marx's works Jaurès adopted a number of his propositions and tried to combine Marxism eclectically with other democratic teachings. Naturally, such inconsistency led him to reformism, both in theoretical questions and in practical activities. But his reformism was not the reformism preached by Bernstein or practised by the English Labour politician James Ramsay MacDonald. Having broken with his own class Jaurès never again held out his hand to the bourgeoisie, never strove to co-operate with them, no matter how much they begged or tried to bribe him. It was precisely because of this that he in-

spired such burning hatred in the propertied classes.

The sources of Jaurès' reformist views were the illusions of bourgeois republicanism which he had not entirely overcome. He sincerely believed that it would be possible by peaceful means, without a fierce class struggle, to transform the bourgeois republic and fill it with new content. Nevertheless, with all his mistakes in the theory and practice of the socialist movement, Jaurès was a confirmed defender of democracy, a consistent fighter against the forces of reaction and war.

The ways of practical implementation of economic measures proposed by Jaurès were in many ways naive. He thought that certain categories of capitalist society could remain unchanged in a socialist society. The general laws of production are distinguished by such immutability and therefore socialists should direct their efforts to the reform of distribution. At the centre of the whole system lies the problem of production and distribution under socialism. But how can the different capabilities and requirements of people be brought to conformity within the framework of socialist production? One could follow Marx's path of communist centralisation or Proudhon's path of anarchic federalism. But Jaurès, who always strove to reconcile everything, here also tried to combine Proudhon with Marx. Being a firm opponent of the centralisation of economic life, he wanted to "transfer" the management of separate branches of industry to the corresponding trade unions or corporations.

He thoroughly substantiated his economic views. In his opinion the system of distribution should be based on the principle of every worker receiving the full product of his labour. He tried to prove that this system of distribution stimulates both consumption and accumulation and through them, technological progress, too. He considered the peaceful development of capitalism into socialism to be the most expedient and advantageous for the proletariat. The bourgeoisie, in his opinion, would, in their own interests, have to agree to a legislative implementation of socialism.

Fresh parliamentary elections were held in 1898 and Jaurès stood as a socialist candidate, but this time, as a result of the intrigues by the reactionaries, he failed to win a seat. He became one of the political editors of *La Petite République*, made lecture tours round the country, wrote a number of articles which later formed his book *Les preuves*, in which he once again returned to the Dreyfus case. He devoted much energy to journeys around the French cities, agitating for a review of the case.

The Waldeck-Rousseau government, in which General Galliffet, the "butcher" of the Commune was war minister, was formed in the summer of 1899. The socialist Millerand also entered the government, which brought disorder to the ranks of the socialists. Paul Lafargue, Vaillant and others condemned Millerand, but Jaurès supported him. He argued that when there was a threat to the republic it must be saved and socialists should enter the government.

Jaurès more than once censured Millerand's actions but thought that participation in a bourgeois government was in certain circumstances permissible. Lenin, opposing those who in principle rejected the participation of socialists in a bourgeois-democratic government, emphasised that: "To judge Jaurèsism from the point of view of dialectical materialism one must draw a clear line between subjective motives and objective historical conditions. Subjectively, Jaurès wanted to save the republic by entering into an alliance with the bourgeois democrats. The objective conditions of this "experiment" were that the republic in France had become an established fact and was in no grave danger; that the working class had every opportunity of developing an independent class political organisation but did not take full advantage of this opportunity, partly because it was influenced by the parliamentary humbug of its leaders; that in actual practice, history was already objectively posing before the working class the tasks of the socialist revolution, *from which* the Millerands were *luring* the proletariat with promises of paltry social reforms."<sup>1</sup> Criticising Jaurès' errors, Lenin at the same time pointed to his service in the struggle for the interests of the working class, and emphasised his sincerity and honesty.

In the 1890s Jaurès was working very hard on the multi-volume *Histoire socialiste collective*. He was the organiser and editor of a collective work of which the first four volumes, devoted to the great French Revolution, he wrote himself. In his

study of the revolution he paid great attention to questions of its economic and social history, drawing on new materials.

Studying the past, he tried to draw a lesson for the future. His efforts were devoted to working out the conception of socialist revolution. His opponents tried to prove that he was in principle an enemy of revolution and that he excluded the possibility of any kind of revolutionary violence, but this was not quite true. Jaurès often condemned violence and brutality but only in circumstances where they could be avoided or where they could not be justified.

Where it was essential and unavoidable he not only allowed but even firmly justified forcible revolutionary measures. Violent revolution he thought to be an extremely difficult and agonising process which it would be far better to replace with easier, more humane methods of fighting.

In his historical work Jaurès examines the extent to which the ideas of Marx and Engels on revolutionary tactics, set out in the *Communist Manifesto*, could be applicable in France and other Western countries. In his studies of certain specific historical problems Jaurès came close to Marxism. Lenin regarded this work as one of the "useful writings"<sup>2</sup> on the history of the French Revolution.

A commission for publishing documents on the economic history of the revolution was set up on Jaurès' initiative. He carefully investigated the agrarian development of France during the revolution. He called his history of the French Revolu-

lution a socialist history and, wishing to justify the title, he studied thoroughly the social movements of the revolutionary epoch, and the first actions by the workers, the germs of socialist ideas and movements. A distinctive feature of Jaurès as a historian is that he was not just an onlooker at the events he studied, but seemed to take an active part in them, evaluating people and phenomena.

He also contributed a great deal to the founding of the French Socialist Party. The upsurge of the working-class movement in France at the beginning of the 20th century made it essential to form a proletarian party in France, and in 1901, as a result of the union of the Guesdists and the Blanquists, the Socialist Party of France came into being. And in 1902 other socialist groups, including the one led by Jaurès, founded the French Socialist Party; in other words, there emerged two parties of socialists, independent of one another, who in April 1905 formed a united French Socialist Party. A number of independent socialists did not join the new party, and Jaurès and his supporters gradually acquired a leading position in it.

Jaurès was elected to Parliament in 1902. During this period he passionately opposed clericalism and supported bills for reforms introducing a progressive income tax.

In 1904 he founded a newspaper with the symbolic title *L'Humanité*, which became the militant organ of revolutionary democracy and of which he was permanent editor until his death. Later,

after the formation of the French Communist Party in 1920, this popular newspaper became the organ of the Central Committee of the FCP.

Jaurès took an active part in the French people's movement of solidarity with the Russian revolution of 1905–1907. Exposing tsarism in Russia Jaurès never identified it with the Russian people. Although he was a supporter of the peaceful transformation of society he welcomed the events of 1905 and approved the revolutionary coercion of the Russian proletariat and, indeed, he was one of the first to point out that the Russian revolution had given the Russian proletariat the leading role in the world revolutionary movement, and that the liberation of the Russian people would place the Russian proletariat in the van of the European proletariat. Even after the defeat of the December uprising in Moscow Jaurès preserved his faith in the Russian revolution.

Five years before the Great October Socialist Revolution he wrote: "Russia, by virtue of the enormous strength of her workers, is preparing to become a power of justice and civilisation; as a result of the efforts of her proletariat she will soon create one of the most wonderful sources of well-being for the whole of mankind."

Jaurès' socialist views were formed to a great extent intuitively, and he frequently needed support in order finally to find the correct path. Thus, in 1907 he received this support from Lenin at the Congress of the Second International in Stuttgart. His views at this time became much more revolutionary, although as always he strove



to avoid a violent reorganisation of the old society, and armed struggle. He often preached the possibility of peaceful forms of struggle; he appealed to the ruling classes, to their reason, conscience and consciousness when only one argument—the organised force of the proletariat—could have effect on them. Independently of his subjective intentions, which always remained upright and noble, he upheld a policy that, politically speaking, could not be qualified other than reformist, as the preaching of class reconciliation.

In striving for social reforms he never lost sight of the final goal—socialism. In this respect he differed radically from Bernstein and other revisionists who renounced it. But quite apart from his subjective intentions, his reformist policy not only did not lead to revolution but, on the contrary, sometimes led in the opposite direction. In this way, the socialist party turned into an appendage of the parliamentary faction and not into a militant revolutionary organisation of the proletariat. Class contradictions were veiled and bourgeois influence spread among the workers, but, though mistaken in his theories, Jaurès, with immense energy and sincerity, fought courageously against capitalism.

He rendered enormous service in his struggle against war. One of the finest orators of his day, he castigated the chief instigators of wars—the imperialists—and fought against any manifestation of militarism. He first used the formula: "Capitalism is pregnant with war as a cloud is pregnant with thunder!", in a speech in the

Chamber of Deputies on March 7, 1895. In later speeches, especially during the last ten years of his life, he developed this thesis and gave concrete expression to it. In 1908 France attacked Morocco and turned it into a colony, and Jaurès actively opposed the aggressive policy of French imperialism. In the Chamber he spoke out against the granting of funds to the government for military operations.

In 1913 the Chamber of Deputies was discussing a bill to increase the length of military service from two to three years. A wave of demonstrations swept through France and disturbances began among the soldiers; Jaurès headed all the democratic forces opposing this bill but it was passed, nevertheless. His struggle against the "three-year law" aroused particularly bitter hatred against him on the part of the chauvinistic militaristic circles who began to subject him to persecution, accusing him of betraying French interests and acting for the benefit of Germany.

On the eve of the First World War, Jaurès, who sensed its inevitable approach, concentrated his attention on the struggle for peace. In a speech at the International Socialist Congress in Basle in 1912 he said that the working people and socialists of all countries should avert war, throw all their forces on the side of peace. In July 1914, at an extraordinary congress of the Socialist Party he proposed to call a general strike against the war, and his proposal was adopted.

In his last speech delivered in Vaise, the working-class quarter of Lyons, on July 25, he said

that there remained only one chance of preserving peace and that was to unite all the proletarian forces of France, Britain, Germany, Italy and Russia in the struggle against war.

In his last article published in *L'Humanité* a day before the outbreak of the world war, and only a few hours before he was murdered, he called upon the workers to join the battle against war. Opposing war, Jaurès did not proceed from the Marxist point of view on the questions of war and militarism. Lenin wrote: "The revolutionary proletariat must carry on a ceaseless agitation against war, always keeping in mind, however, that wars are inevitable as long as class rule exists. Trite phrases about peace *à la* Jaurès are of no use to the oppressed class, which is not responsible for a bourgeois war between two bourgeois nations..."<sup>3</sup>

Jaurès' fearlessness and consistency in the struggle against the instigators of war, which gave him such popularity among the broad masses, was also the source of the hatred felt by the imperialists towards this great tribune.

Mindful of Jaurès' strength and influence the ruling circles spared nothing in their efforts to suborn him, they tried to lure him with ministerial portfolios, power, fame and wealth. Only a few hours before he was killed he was offered a portfolio in Viviani's Cabinet. Even the tsarist government of Russia, well informed of the strength of his influence, attempted in 1906, to offer him 200,000 francs in exchange for giving up the campaign against the Russian loan.

Jaurès was murdered on the 31st of July, 1914.

His murder aroused a storm of anger; there were mass meetings and demonstrations. The wrath of the masses was so violent that the government was compelled to issue a special appeal, signed by the Prime Minister, calling upon the people to maintain order and promising to punish the murderer.

The trial of the murderer not only did not expose the true organisers of the crime, who belonged to the most reactionary, chauvinistic circles of the French bourgeoisie, but did not even punish the criminal.

When the bourgeois court acquitted the murderer—Villain, 300 thousand French workers joined in a demonstration in honour of their leader, protesting against the monstrous verdict. In the end bourgeois France was compelled to reckon with the nation-wide love for Jaurès and allow the miners of Carmaux in 1924 to place his remains in the Pantheon, the burial-vault of France's greatest men.



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**Pierre Proudhon**  
**1809–1865**

## UNJUST JUSTICE

There were many in the French Constituent Assembly who could not conceal their hostility towards deputy Proudhon. Author of "extravagant" articles, overthrower of property, "a terror of a man"—these and many other names were applied to him by the deputies on the Right wing. They tried not to notice him, no one shook his hand. During his rare speeches they looked at him with indifferent eyes. Owners of vast estates, descendants of aristocratic families, manufacturers and heirs to manufacturers—the cream of the nation. Why should they take any notice of this upstart from the common people?

Pierre-Joseph Proudhon was born on the 15th of January, 1809, to a poor peasant family in Besançon. He was the eldest of five children. Like many of his friends he worked in the fields before he was twelve and tended cattle. It was only thanks to a local patron that he was able to enter the secondary school. He read avidly, was a com

stant visitor to the library. Naturally, there was almost no money and he was obliged to borrow the necessary textbooks from his classmates.

However, because of extreme poverty Proudhon was unable to complete the school course. He became first a compositor and then a proof-reader in the printing house of the Gauthier brothers. But the firm was soon ruined and he found himself unemployed. He went everywhere in search of work—Paris, Marseilles, Lyons and Toulon—and then, on his return to Besançon, he went back to work for the Gauthiers, who had opened a new press. In 1836 he managed to scrape together a small amount of capital and became co-owner of a small printing firm in Besançon.

Throughout this time Proudhon continued his self-education, studying Latin, Greek and Hebrew. However, he was unable to receive a systematic education and this told on all his works later on.

In 1837 he wrote his first work *Essai de grammaire générale*, in which he examined questions of philology. The Besançon Academy decided to grant him a bursary of 1,500 francs for three years from 1838. The Academy had at this time announced a competition on the theme *L'utilité de la célébration du dimanche* (The Benefit of Celebrating Sunday), which Proudhon entered and in 1839 received honourable mention and was awarded a medal. However, the Academy soon suspended the sale of his pamphlet, finding the author's ideas too paradoxical. The basic idea of

this work was that the establishment of a weekly day off is inextricably bound up with a political system based on equality.

The appearance of his first book, in spite of all the troubles, gave Proudhon wings. He moved to Paris to devote himself to serious literary and scientific work. This was attended by great financial difficulties, as he was sending two-thirds of his stipend home. The constant shortage of money taught him modesty, and concern for his family taught him thrift and moderation.

In this situation Proudhon conceived the idea of writing a book that would expose property owning. In one of his letters he wrote that he must kill in mortal combat inequality and property owning. His book *Qu'est-ce que la propriété?* (*What Is Property?*) appeared in 1840, and brought him wide renown and popularity among the radically-minded intelligentsia. This sharp and at the same time convincing work boldly infringed the principles of bourgeois society, proclaimed the necessity of doing away with private ownership. He posed the question of what form the social system should take, and answered it by proposing free association, observing equality in the means of production and equivalence of exchange. He held that in the name of justice exchange should be carried out without money or profits. In his opinion, it was only then could justice, which was the main idea in his work, be achieved. He believed that there is an immutable justice, given once and for all, and that it should form the basis of a future society. Marx and



Engels fought against such a metaphysical approach. Social and economic categories must never be regarded as eternal and absolute. In his book *The Housing Question*, Engels wrote: "The petty-bourgeois Proudhon aspires to a world in which each person turns out a separate and independent product that is immediately consumable and exchangeable in the market. Then, as long as each person receives back the full value of his labour in the form of another product 'eternal justice' is satisfied and the best possible world created." <sup>1</sup>

The book *What is Property?* written in the course of a few months, coined the expression: "property is theft". The importance the author himself attached to it can be seen from the fact that, in his own words, this short sentence was the most outstanding event during the reign of Louis Philippe.

Incidentally, Proudhon borrowed it from Brissot, one of the outstanding figures of the French bourgeois revolution at the end of the 18th century. The originality of Proudhon's work lay only in its form: he was fond of fine turns of phrase, combining them with provocative defiance.

In compliance with a request from Schweitzer, one of the prominent leaders of the Lassalleans in Germany, at that time president of the General Association of German Workers, to express his opinion on Proudhon's works Marx wrote in 1865: "His first work, *What is Property?*, is by all means his best work. It is epoch-making, if not for the newness of its content, then at least for

the new and audacious way in which old things are said...

"In this book of Proudhon's there still prevails, if I may be allowed the expression, a strong muscular style. And its style is, in my opinion, its chief merit... Provocative defiance, laying hands on the economic 'holy of holies', superb paradox which makes a mock of bourgeois common sense, withering criticism, bitter irony, and, betrayed here and there, a deep and genuine feeling of indignation at the infamy of what exists, revolutionary earnestness—because of all this *What is Property?* had an electrifying effect and produced a great impression upon its first appearance. In a strictly scientific history of political economy the book would hardly be worth mentioning. But sensational works of this kind play their part in the sciences just as much as in polite literature." <sup>2</sup>

And so Proudhon declared that property is theft because it is contrary to justice. But he opposed only large-scale property, counterposing to it small property which he called possessions. It turned out that, criticising private property he had in mind only large-scale capitalist property, exploiting and ruining small-scale producer-proprietors; that he opposed only usurious capital, stock exchange, and speculation, and advocated at first under the guise of possessions and later quite openly, small private property which, in his opinion, was the foundation of economic progress and the freedom of the producer as an individual.

Quite naturally, his book *What Is Property?* aroused fierce hatred in the owners of large pro-

perty and their apologists. The reactionaries began a crusade in defence of the "sacred private property". The reaction of the Besançon Academy was just as sharply negative. There were stormy meetings in the Academy in connection with the book, it was proposed to make the author renounce it, to withdraw his stipend. He was accused of stirring up hatred for the government and various classes, and of insulting religion. He was even prosecuted in court, but was eventually acquitted, and the sale of the book was permitted.

In 1843 he began work as a salesman in a transport firm in Lyons and in this capacity travelled a great deal and participated in several court hearings defending the interests of the firm. In 1844 he made the acquaintance of Karl Marx in Paris. Marx later recollected that in the course of long arguments, frequently continuing well into the night, "...I infected him, to his great injury, with Hegelianism, which, owing to his lack of German, he could not study properly."<sup>3</sup>

In 1843 Proudhon published his work *De la création de l'ordre dans l'humanité* (On the Creation of Order in Humanity), and began to write *Système des contradictions économiques ou philosophie de la misère* (A System of Economic Contradictions, or a Philosophy of Poverty), published in 1846, in which he set out in more detail his proposals for a just society. It contained a number of theoretical propositions which were subjected to serious criticism by the founders of scientific communism.

Shortly before the appearance of the *Philosophy of Poverty* he wrote to Marx saying he awaited Marx's stern criticism. In due course he received a severe critique of his work which put an end to their friendship. Marx paraphrased the title and called it *The Poverty of Philosophy* (1847). Proudhon's views obstructed the spreading of the ideas of scientific communism among the working people and had to be subjected to a detailed and deep criticism. In his own work, Marx, besides criticising Proudhon's conceptions, expressed a number of new propositions, which have become part of the treasure store of the teaching on scientific communism.

Proudhon, criticising capitalist relations, attacked the ideology of the working class. In this connection Marx noted that Proudhon was a typical petty-bourgeois ideologist and his socialism was the socialism of the craftsman and peasant. A little later Proudhon produced a plan for social reforms by means of establishing a people's bank, which would give free credit to the needy and exchange products for products. For this purpose he proposed that banknotes should be backed not by hard cash, bullions or immovables, but by products. As a result of the activities of such a bank gold and silver coins would lose their value and disappear, an unlimited market would develop, taxes and customs would disappear, property would transform, the state would cease to exist and so on. He spoke of the organisation of mutual services of all members of society, thanks to which, in his opinion, exploitation of the work-

ing people would be ended. With this aim in view he put forward some time later the idea of setting up an "exchange market".

Examining the essence of Proudhon's economic theory, Lenin wrote: "Not abolishing capitalism and its basis—commodity production—but *purging* that basis of abuses, of excrescences, and so forth; not abolishing exchange and exchange value, but, on the contrary, making it 'constitutional', universal, absolute, 'fair' and free of fluctuations, crises and abuses—such was Proudhon's idea".<sup>4</sup>

Proudhon underestimated the role of production and overestimated that of circulation, of trade. He considered that the indigence of the workers was not the result of exploitation by the employers, but was born of the fact that exchange takes place unjustly, unequally, and this inequality, this injustice in exchange is the real cause of poverty. According to him exchange should be just, that is, without money and without profit, and then pauperism, luxury, oppression, vice, crime and hunger would disappear.

The basic path to social reforms, according to Proudhon, was not revolution but the reorganisation of exchange. In order to spread his ideas he began to publish a newspaper in Paris at the end of 1847, which he called *Représentant du peuple*. He wrote articles in which he persistently preached the idea of setting up a system of free credit. Not long before the February revolution of 1848, Proudhon, without excessive modesty, declared that he was the only man the people

could count on, and whom the reactionaries feared. However, he took no part in the street battles in the revolution of February 1848. Moreover, it had broken out quite inopportunistically for him, insofar as only a few weeks earlier he had declaimed that the age of revolutions had passed for ever.

In June 1848 he stood as a candidate in the by-elections to the Constituent Assembly. He published *A Revolutionary Programme* in which, addressing the electors of the Seine department, he described the essence of his system. He did not renounce his proposition: the "property is theft", but explained that he was the supporter of property just as any bourgeois. He was successful and became a deputy. It seemed that now he was nearer than he had ever been to his goal—the peaceful transformation of society. He had at his disposal the rostrum of the Constituent Assembly, newspapers prepared to spread his ideas and a government proclaiming reforms.

But here the course of events was intervened by forces that Proudhon often had tried to restrain. The Parisian proletariat had grown tired of words. Deceived by the bourgeois government, disillusioned by empty talk in the Luxembourg Palace of the right to work, provoked to action by the closure of the national workshops, they took up arms to fight for their rights, to come to grips with their exploiters.

In the middle of June the city became covered with barricades. Above them waved red and tricolour banners and the posters carrying the words:

"Long live the social republic!" Proudhon was frightened, confused, discouraged, but, to his credit, he did not remain a silent witness to the shooting of the workers by the bourgeoisie in the person of Cavaignac.

In a speech made in the Constituent Assembly he condemned the shooting of those taking part in the Paris uprising, describing it as an act of violence and arbitrariness. And here he again began to speak of his system of exchange, this panacea for all ills, thereby demonstrating that he had understood nothing of the events he had witnessed.

Evaluating Proudhon's conduct at this period, Marx, wrote in 1865: "His utterances in the National Assembly, however little insight they showed into existing conditions, were worthy of every praise. *After* the June insurrection they were an act of great courage. In addition they had the fortunate consequence that M. *Thiers*, by his speech opposing Proudhon's proposals, which was then issued as a special publication, proved to the whole of Europe what infantile catechism served this spiritual pillar of the French bourgeoisie as his pedestal. Indeed, compared to M. *Thiers*, *Proudhon* swelled until he was the size of an antediluvian colossus." <sup>5</sup>

Proudhon tried to put his ideas into practice and announced in his newspaper *Le Peuple* that shares in the People's Bank were open for subscription. Shares totalling 36,000 francs were sold. On February 11, 1849, he declared the bank open. What hopes did Proudhon bind up with the People's Bank?

Engels wrote about such proposals: "...Proletarians are to *save up* to buy small shares of stock. By means of these (they will, of course, not start with less than 10,000-20,000 workers) one or several workshops, belonging to one or several trades will be opened to begin with. Part of the shareholders will be employed there... As the capital of the association is increased by newcomers or new savings of the old shareholders it is invested in the building of new workshops and factories, and so on and so forth, until *all* proletarians are employed, *all* productive forces in the country are bought up, and thereby the capital in the hands of the bourgeoisie is deprived of the power to command labour and produce profit! ...These people intend to do neither more nor less than to *buy up the whole of France* for the time being and later perhaps the whole world by dint of proletarian savings, provided they waive profit and interest on their capital... It is an outrage that one must still take up the cudgels against such barbarous balderdash." <sup>6</sup>

Proudhon's plan was another version of the workers' bazaars, which representatives of Utopian socialism, particularly Robert Owen, had more than once tried, always unsuccessfully, in England.

It stands to reason that in conditions of the domination of commodity production and cut-throat competition the whole venture was doomed to failure. It was less than two months before Proudhon declared his bank closed and returned the money to the shareholders.

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His speeches in defence of the working people brought him fame. His newspaper *Le Peuple* became one of the most popular, while the sensational speeches of its editor in the Constituent Assembly placed him firmly in the ranks of those opposed to the government.

In March 1849, Proudhon was arrested for a number of sharply worded articles against the French President, Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte, and sentenced to three years' imprisonment and a fine of 3,000 francs. The paper was closed down, although his friends, with the help of a security, contributed by Herzen, succeeded in founding a new paper *La Voix du Peuple*. Proudhon continued to write in prison.

His *Les confessions d'un révolutionnaire* (Confessions of a Revolutionary) appeared in 1849, and a little later *Idée générale de la révolution au XIX-me siècle* (A General Idea of Revolution in the 19th Century). He wrote that there existed sufficient cause for a revolution in the 19th century. The revolution should, in his opinion, destroy "laws", leaving only "agreements".

Proudhon regarded the state as the chief source of class contradictions and put forward utopian plans for the peaceful abolition of the state. He created a system of social liquidation the essence of which was the complete removal of states, governments and powers from social relations, and the organisation of society on a basis of agreements and exchange of services without coercion. He also proposed to replace political centralisation by economic. However, his ideal

society was not centralised economically but, on the contrary, completely dispersed and consisted of small-scale independent commodity producers.

In a letter to Engels on August 14, 1851, Marx evaluated the basic propositions of Proudhon's theory thus: "The essence of Proudhonism, and the whole of it is, above all, a polemic against communism, is summed up in the following:

"The real enemy to be overcome is Capital. The purely economic manifestation of capital is interest. The so-called profit is but a special form of wage. Interest is destroyed by its conversion into an annuity, that is, annual payments in paying off capital. In this way the working class, which means the *industrial* class, will always be assured of the advantage, and the capitalist class proper is doomed to disappear gradually. Various forms of interest are interest on monetary loans, house rents and payments for land leases. In this way bourgeois society is preserved, its existence is justified and only its bad tendency is removed." <sup>7</sup>

In 1852 Proudhon wrote his book *La révolution sociale démontrée par le coup d'état du 2 décembre* (The Social Revolution in the Light of the Coup d'état of December 2) where he makes an attempt to justify the coup d'état by Louis Bonaparte on the 2nd of December, 1851, which was followed by the establishment of the Second Empire regime in the country. Marx qualified this book as a flirtation with Louis Bonaparte, having the aim of presenting the coup as acceptable to the French working class.

Marx writes: "...In his book on Louis Bona-  
parte, Proudhon openly acknowledges what I had  
first deduced from his *Philosophy of Poverty*, that  
his ideal is the petty bourgeois. France, he says,  
consists of three classes: 1) the bourgeoisie, 2) the  
middle class (the petty bourgeoisie), and 3) the  
proletariat. The aim of history and, in particular,  
of revolution, is to dissolve the extremes – the first  
and third classes – in the second class, the golden  
mean, and this is to be achieved by means of Prou-  
dhon's credit operations, the ultimate result  
of which should be the abolition of interest  
in its various forms." <sup>8</sup>

The inconsistency of Proudhon's ideas was not  
accidental, but was a reflection of the unstable  
position of the petty bourgeoisie, whose faithful  
champion he was, in a capitalist society. In 1858  
he produced an anti-clerical work *De la justice  
dans la révolution et dans l'église* (Justice in the  
Revolution and in the Church) which was banned  
and confiscated, and for which he was again sen-  
tenced to imprisonment. However, he managed to  
escape to Belgium, thus avoiding another course  
of "reformation" in jail. He was amnestied in  
1860 but did not return to France until 1862. He  
continued to work hard in the 1860s.

He died in January 1865. His last work *De la  
capacité des classes ouvrières* (On the Political  
Capabilities of the Working Classes) was pub-  
lished posthumously, in 1865.

Subjectively, as a politician, he strove to subor-  
dinate his every speech, every action, to the strug-  
gle for a better life for the poorest and the most  
oppressed classes in capitalist society. He had

every right to say: "Whoever is poor is my kinsman". But the words, the personal strivings of Proudhon are one thing, and the actual results of his activities are something else. He was unable to rise to the level of scientific socialism any more than he was able to overcome his petty-bourgeois prejudices.

His plans for the reorganisation of the existing society had a utopian character, and his methods, based as they were on the rejection of the class struggle, sowed harmful illusions among the workers to the effect that they could, with the help of "people's banks", "exchange bazaars" and the like, radically improve their position. Failure to understand the role of the state led Proudhon to the rejection of any kind of state whatsoever.

History itself demonstrated the weakness of his plans. While the author of the sensational *What Is Property?* was still alive he witnessed the failure of the People's Bank. But the Paris Commune of 1871 dealt a telling blow to Proudhonism. His followers, participants in the actions of the Parisian workers, acted quite differently from what their teacher had preached. The logic of the class struggle dictated to them the sort of social and economic measures of which there is not a single word in Proudhon's works, but of which there is a great deal said in the works of Marx and Engels.

"Proudhon," Engels wrote in the 1880s, "played much too significant a role in the history of the European working-class movement for him

to fall into oblivion without more ado. Refuted theoretically and discarded practically, he still retains his historical interest. Whoever occupies himself in any detail with modern socialism must also acquaint himself with the 'surmounted stand-points' of the movement." <sup>9</sup>

On this subject Lenin wrote: "Every viable working-class movement has brought to the fore such working-class leaders, its own Proudhons, Vaillants, Weitlings, and Bebels." <sup>10</sup>

Proudhon's pronouncements also played a positive role. His brilliantly constructed works left no one indifferent, aroused proletarian interest in socialist trends.



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**Mikhail Bakunin**  
**1814 - 1876**

## A RESTLESS SOUL

It would be difficult to find in the European revolutionary movement of the 1840s to the 1860s a more restless and contradictory personality than Bakunin. Belinsky reminiscing about the beginning of their friendship, said that he was captivated by Bakunin's restless spirit and keen striving after truth.

Driven by this restless spirit, Bakunin appeared wherever revolutionary events were brewing or bitter battles were going on. In 1848-1849 he was to be seen on the barricades of Paris and Berlin, among the leaders of the insurrections in Prague and Dresden. He was twice sentenced to death, he spent eight years in West European and Russian prisons under the severest regimes, four years in exile in Siberia and more than two decades, to the end of his life, in emigration.

Mikhail Alexandrovich Bakunin was born on the 18th of May, 1814, in the village of Pryamukhino, Novy Torzhok district, Tver province. His parents were descended from ancient families of the nobility. On his mother's side he was related to the Muravyevs who had given Russia pro-

minent participants in the Decembrists' movement. His father was an educated man who admired the 18th-century French Enlightenment. He was educated abroad and after gaining a degree in philosophy from the university of Padua, served for many years in Russian embassies in various countries. The large family—Bakunin had four sisters and five younger brothers—was brought up in an atmosphere of friendship and harmony. Literature, music and painting were among their earliest interests. The father taught his children history, physics, cosmography and geography.

In 1828 Bakunin was sent to study in the Artillery Cadet School in St. Petersburg. Here he came up against ways and customs that differed sharply from all that had previously surrounded him. In January 1833 he was commissioned and posted to a unit stationed in a remote town in the province of Grodno. At this time he was reading a lot and pondering on the future. He dreamed of living for his brothers, of showing them the way to Truth, of probing the secrets of Nature in order to reveal them to mankind... But military service to which he felt not the slightest inclination was a barrier to this, and in 1835, without telling his father, he retired.

Settled in Moscow he wrote to his father that he needed no help as he was thinking of earning a living by teaching mathematics. He took this decisive step largely under the influence of his acquaintance with N. V. Stankevich's circle.

The members of this circle were keen on Ger-



man idealistic philosophy. The problem of Man and his mission were the questions that occupied Stankevich and his friends. It was here that Bakunin met the future revolutionary democrats Belinsky, Herzen and Ogaryov.

This was a crucial period in the development of the Russian liberation movement, a period of crisis experienced by the revolutionary-minded nobility, the appearance of new ideas and trends. Pondering over the reasons for the failure of the Decembrists' insurrection in 1825 the revolutionaries began to think more and more about the people and their place in the social movement.

In these years Bakunin was a follower of Hegelian philosophy and mastered it to such an extent that after Stankevich's departure he became its generally recognised interpreter in the circle, and preached it in countless letters and conversations with all his acquaintances.

However Bakunin, like many other members of the circle, not only assimilated Hegel's dialectics but also his practical conclusion—all that is real is rational—which led him to reconciliation with the existence of serfdom and autocracy in Russia. Only gradually, under the influence of the anti-feudal struggle of the peasantry, did he begin to overcome this conclusion which was harmful for him. But it was not until he went to Germany in 1840 that he finally rid himself of the "philosophical hood of Hegel". Having gone to Berlin in order to make a deeper study of philosophy, he found himself drawn into the whirlpool of political passions and upheavals going on in Europe,

and became a witness of the first revolutionary actions of the proletariat. The risings of the factory workers in Lyons and the weavers in Silesia, Chartism in England—all combined to arouse in Bakunin a sincere interest in the poorest and most oppressed class.

The future revolutionary simultaneously continued with his scholarly literary activities, but whereas his first works were written in the conciliatory spirit of Hegelianism, his article "Reaction in Germany. An Essay by a Frenchman", published in 1842 in the *German Year Book*, marked a turnover in his philosophical views. There was no longer any word of reconciliation with the existing order; on the contrary, the article sounded like a call to revolution. The author stated that the question of revolution was on the agenda, that revolution was unavoidable, it was maturing and mounting not only in Europe, but even in Russia where the mass of the people, enslaved, oppressed and exploited, was awaiting it with hope. The whole content of the article boiled down to the idea that the development of the historical process was leading directly to the defeat of reaction and the victory of revolution.

The article on reaction in Germany received wide response and the most favourable comment. But the government of Saxony became particularly suspicious towards Bakunin, and in 1843 he was compelled to move to Switzerland, where he began to carry on revolutionary propaganda directed against the reactionary German governments. But the Russian embassy began to take an inter-

est in his activities here and early in 1844 he moved secretly, first to Brussels and then to Paris, where he made the acquaintance of Marx and Engels. His close friendship with Proudhon also relates to this period. His connections with the West European socialists were becoming wider.

The logic of the struggle prompted Bakunin to speak openly against the Russian autocracy and serfdom. His connections with all the revolutionarily-minded people of his day attracted the attention of the Russian government, and on the orders of the tsar, the St. Petersburg Criminal Court deprived him of all property rights and sentenced him to hard labour in Siberia.

He became one of the first Russian political émigrés, but the reverses of fortune did not frighten him. In Paris he was immersed in the life of the French socialists. He was caught up in an atmosphere of acute political conflict between the radical bourgeoisie and the reactionary government of Louis Philippe, and witnessed the growth of the working-class movement. Proudhon, with his demands for the freedom of the individual and his rejection of the state, made a particularly strong impression on Bakunin at this time. Proudhon played an enormous part in the development of Bakunin's ideas and later on Bakunin himself frequently spoke of Proudhon as his teacher.

In the autumn of 1847, at a meeting in Paris to commemorate the Polish insurrection of 1830–1831, Bakunin made a speech in which he denounced tsarism, foretold the inevitability of

revolution in Russia and, on behalf of progressive Russians called on the Poles to unite in the name of the liberation of all Slavs. For this speech Bakunin was expelled from France at the request of the Russian government and so he went to Brussels. Revolution broke out in Paris in February 1848 and soon swept almost all the countries of Western Europe. The Russian revolutionary found himself in the thick of events: he was active in revolutionary Paris, took a direct part in the insurrection in Prague in 1848. After the insurrection was suppressed he fled to Breslau from where he hoped to organise a new revolutionary action, but the uprising in Dresden changed his plans and he became one of its leaders. He threw all his energies into the organisation of revolutionary power and the defence of the city against the Prussian troops. For the former officer, his knowledge of military matters was a great help, but did not, incidentally, prevent him from displaying political adventurism. He suggested that the most valuable and finest pictures from the Dresden Art Gallery be placed on the walls of the city for its defence. He believed that the Prussians were too well educated to open fire on such artistic treasures.

After the suppression of the rising Bakunin, with two companions, one of whom was the composer Richard Wagner, tried to hide in a small border town. Wagner got away but Bakunin was caught and handed over to the Prussian authorities. He was at first kept in prison in Saxony, where in January 1850 he was sentenced to death,

later commuted to life imprisonment in a fortress, where he was overtaken by the "chastising hand" of Austrian justice—he had to pay for his participation in the Prague insurrection. Saxony handed him over at the request of the Austrian government, and again trial, again sentence of death by hanging. But this time too, he was pardoned and the sentence was changed to one of solitary confinement for an indefinite period.

In Austrian prisons he was kept chained to the wall, the shackles on his arms and legs were never removed. Yet he still seemed dangerous to the Austrian government, so in 1851 the authorities preferred to hand him over to their ally Nicholas I, and after eleven years Bakunin once again found himself in Russia. Here he was confined in the Alekseyevsky ravelin of the Peter and Paul Fortress and afterwards in the fortress of Shlisselburg. From the Peter and Paul Fortress Bakunin sent a confessional letter to Nicholas in which he told of the revolutionary events in Europe and his part in them. The form of this document was incompatible with the ethics of a revolutionary, smacking of repentance, but the lot of the state criminal was not eased. It was only after the death of Nicholas, when Bakunin submitted a second petition, that the new tsar, Alexander II agreed in 1857 to replace the sentence of imprisonment by exile to Siberia. Behind Bakunin were eight years of solitary confinement in Saxon, Austrian and Russian fortresses. After four years in Siberia he managed to escape, travelling almost round the world in doing so.

Long years of jail and exile had not broken his revolutionary spirit, but he had clearly lagged behind life. In the new upsurge of revolutionary and national liberation movements in the 1860s the proletariat was becoming more active. Favourable conditions had developed for the creation of the first mass international revolutionary organisation of the workers, the International Working Men's Association. Life was proving more and more convincingly the correctness of Marxist ideas. But Bakunin continued to draw on the conception which had absorbed the most varied petty-bourgeois theories.

Bakunin joined the International Working Men's Association at the end of 1864, but in fact he was working against the Association. In 1867 he took an active part in the work of the pacifist bourgeois League of Peace and Freedom, founded to counterbalance the International. He put forward a plan for the unification of the League and the International: the proletariat, he argued, will support the bourgeoisie in their struggle for bourgeois-democratic freedoms and the bourgeoisie, in turn, will promote the economic liberation of the proletariat.

The venture was a failure and Bakunin left the League. He founded the anarchist International Alliance of Social Democracy, which was to join the International while preserving its own structure and programme. It was an attempt to subordinate the proletarian organisation. The General Council, led by Marx, categorically rejected these attempts, demanding the disbandment of the

Alliance and its entry into the International as its section. Bakunin accepted these conditions, but even after this he continued to hope that he could use the proletarian organisation for his own ends, and carried on a schismatic policy within the Association.

The struggle of Marx and Engels against anarchism was one of principle, it was a battle of ideas, which was of great significance for the development of the theory of scientific communism. In this struggle the founders of Marxism fought for the organisationally independent International, opposing any attempts to turn the working-class movement into the channel of anarchism. Marx and Engels' works such as *The Alliance of Socialist Democracy and the International Working Men's Association*, *Fictitious Splits in the International*, *Bakuninists at Work*, *On Authority* and *Political Indifference* were devoted to the struggle against anarchism. Bakunin's basic work *The State and Anarchism* (1873), was subjected to criticism by Marx which touched on the most important questions of the essence of a state. This criticism is of particular interest.

The Bakuninists were enemies of a disciplined working-class party and political struggle, claiming all this to be incompatible with the freedom of the individual. In the name of individualistically understood freedom they not only rejected the necessity for an organised proletarian movement, but tried in every way to destroy the international proletarian organisation, founded by Marx and Engels, the First International. For this

reason Marx and Engels regarded Bakuninism as the enemy of the working-class movement.

Their intense struggle against Bakuninism was a struggle for the historic destinies of the working-class movement. Exposing Bakunin's anarchic conception Marx and Engels showed that the historic need for the dictatorship of the proletariat stemmed from the irreconcilability of class interests between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. The dictatorship of the proletariat is essential for the building of communism.

Marx and Engels' consistent struggle against Bakunin ended in the utter defeat of Bakuninism. The 1872 Hague Congress of the International expelled Bakunin from its ranks. By the end of the 1880s Bakuninism had ceased to exist as an ideological and political trend, although separate ideas of his were from time to time revived in one form or another.

The Franco-Prussian war broke out in 1870. Immediately after the first defeats of the French troops large-scale spontaneous workers' demonstrations were held in Paris demanding the overthrow of Napoleon III's regime, the proclamation of a republic and the issue of arms to every citizen able to use them. The Commune was proclaimed on the 18th of March, 1871, marking a new stage in the development of the International, which entered on a period of affirmation of the political programme of the working-class movement.

Although Bakunin took part in the action of Lyons' workers he had no faith in the success of



the revolution, but he expressed great respect for the Parisian proletarians. His speeches defending the Commune gained him numerous supporters among the workers. It was then that he published two important works: *Letters to a Frenchman on the Contemporary Crisis*, and *The Knout-German Empire and the Social Revolution*, in which he set out his views on the situation in Europe and on the tasks of the social revolution. Lecturing to working-class audiences in Sonvilier he spoke about the leading role of the workers in the social revolution and about the need for them to unite with the peasantry. The experience of the Commune convinced him of the necessity for organising the workers.

Thus the working-class movement taught Bakunin a lesson, caused him to abandon Utopian concepts of the people and come closer to a correct understanding of the role of the workers in the social revolution. Nevertheless, in the struggle against Marxism Bakunin relied on his anarchistic interpretation of the experience of the Paris Commune, which, in his opinion, was an attempt to destroy any state and implement the principles of federalism and anarchy. As Lenin commented, the anarchists "completely misunderstood its (the Paris Commune.—*Ed.*) lessons and Marx's analysis of these lessons. Anarchism has given nothing even approximating true answers to the concrete political questions: Must the old state machine be *smashed*? And *what* should be put in its place?"<sup>1</sup>

In this connection it is appropriate here to cite

the evaluation of Bakunin's anarchistic doctrine given by Marx and Engels. "Anarchy, then", they wrote, "is the great war-horse of their master Bakunin, who has taken nothing from the socialist systems except a set of slogans. All socialists see anarchy as the following programme: once the aim of the proletarian movement, i. e., abolition of classes, is attained, the power of the State, which serves to keep the great majority of producers in bondage to a very small minority of exploiters, disappears, and the functions of government become simple administrative functions. The Alliance draws an entirely different picture. It proclaims anarchy in proletarian ranks as the most infallible means of breaking the powerful concentration of social and political forces in the hands of the exploiters. Under this pretext, it asks the International, at a time when the old world is seeking a way of crushing it, to replace its organisation with anarchy. The international police want nothing better for perpetuating the Thiers republic, while cloaking it in a royal mantle."<sup>2</sup>

The last years of Bakunin's life were a period of deep disappointments and spiritual crisis. He saw that his theories and tactics had found no response among the majority of organised workers. The anarchists' attempts to start an uprising in Spain in the summer of 1873, and in Italy in August 1874, in which Bakunin himself took part, ended in complete failure and prepared the ground for the intensification of reaction which had overwhelmed Europe after the defeat of the Paris Commune.

Occupied with the revolutionary activity, Bakunin cared nothing for his personal well-being and was constantly in financial difficulties. The threadbare state of his clothes, the extreme poverty of his furnishings and the minimal level of his personal requirements were always remarked on by anyone who wrote about him. But he worked hard right up to the last days of his life. He died on the 1st of July, (June 19th, Old Style), 1876 in Berne, still not understanding that his theory and tactics were mistaken.

He was a revolutionary who devoted his whole life to the cause of freeing the workers from exploitation and oppression. He exposed despotic regimes and bourgeois orders, called the masses to revolution and himself took part in revolutionary battles, and tried to prove that only a socialist society, based on collective ownership of the means of production, could make the enslavement of man by man impossible and ensure equality, freedom and justice.

Bakunin's activities had a revolutionising effect on his contemporaries. His influence was particularly strong in Russia where there were still strong survivals of feudal serfdom. The proletariat as a class was just arising and in these conditions Bakuninism fell on fertile soil, and was perceived as a weapon in the struggle of the peasant masses to free themselves from the yoke of serfdom. Referring to the risings led by Razin and Pugachev, he attempted to prove that a nationwide peasant uprising was possible.

Bakunin, and after him the Narodniks (Popu-

lists), passed off the bourgeois democratic revolution as a socialist one, identifying the petty-bourgeois interests of the peasantry with the socialist demands of the working class. As Lenin pointed out, there wasn't a grain of real socialism in the socialist theories of the Narodniks. Nevertheless, in its objective content, the theory of "peasant socialism" expressed the urge of the broad peasant masses to destroy feudal land tenure completely and clear the way for the unrestricted development of capitalism. Lenin wrote: "The Narodniks' constructive plans are utopia. But their constructive plans have an element that is destructive in relation to medievalism. And that element is by no means utopia. It is the most living reality. It is the most consistent and progressive reality from the standpoint of capitalism and the proletariat." <sup>3</sup>

In essence, Bakunin's conception of the future preached the break-up of society into a whole conglomerate of exclusive economic units. The concentration of labour and property within these associations, and the absence of a central authority to co-ordinate production on the scale of the entire society, are qualities of anarchy which would lead to production by exclusive units, competing among themselves. Bakunin makes no mention of the necessity for planning social production. His idea is, in fact, a preaching of the viability of the traditional Russian commune which, he alleged, was a cell of socialism.

Bakunin's anarchistic world outlook expressed the mood of the mass of the peasantry and the

petty bourgeoisie which were being ruined and joined the working class. He placed his main hopes on the peasantry and artisans, the semi-proletarian sections of the urban population, on the lumpen-proletariat. Objectively, Bakunin's anarchism and rebellious revolutionary spirit were a reflection of the dissatisfaction and protest of the petty-bourgeois masses, ruined by capitalism. According to him, the primary cause of all exploitation was the state, any state, and therefore he saw the primary aim of revolution as the abolition of the state.

Insofar as he did not comprehend the essence of class antagonism he could not imagine over whom the proletariat would dominate. Attributing to Marxism a hostile attitude towards the peasantry he supposed that Marxism had in mind the domination of the proletariat over the peasantry. His lack of understanding of the laws governing the development of capitalist society led him to the conclusion that the state in general would have to be abolished.

In the final analysis, Bakunin concluded that it was essential to abolish any state and establish anarchy. He counterposed anarchy to any society where a state existed. This was a very dangerous theory which disarmed the working class and the mass of the people in the struggle against the exploiters and made the restoration of capitalism inevitable.

Lenin showed that the proletariat needs the state for the building of communism. He wrote: "We do not at all differ with the anarchists on

the question of the abolition of the state as the *aim*. We maintain that, to achieve this aim, we must temporarily make use of the instruments, resources and methods of state power *against* the exploiters, just as the temporary dictatorship of the oppressed class is necessary for the abolition of classes." 4

Bakunin opposed private property and exploitation. He understood that capitalism brings with it oppression and poverty for the working people. However, in practice, expressing the interests of the petty bourgeoisie, Bakunin demanded in the first place the abolition of the state, seeing in it, and not in capital, the main evil of society. Not understanding the historic role of the working class he placed all his hopes on the peasantry. The task of the revolutionary, he believed, was to rouse the peasants to revolution, to head a spontaneous peasant revolt which would abolish any state.

Convinced that his ideas would bring freedom to the working people he tried to turn the working-class movement onto the path of anarchy, and rejected the struggle for political freedoms. He was convinced that, not bringing any improvement for the masses, strengthening only the bourgeoisie, it would divert the masses from rebellious moods, corrupt them with state illusions. In Bakunin's opinion, the form the state took was of no importance. He didn't even notice any particular difference between a monarchy and a republic. Marx and Engels showed that rejection of the participation of the proletariat in the political

struggle leads to the subordination of the working class to bourgeois policy, and the rejection of the dictatorship of the proletariat—to the denial of the need for an independent political party.

Wherever Bakunin lived and worked he preached hatred of the existing system, lit the fire of insurrection and raised the revolutionary spirit and energy. He was the exponent of revolutionary ideas in the pre-proletarian era.

Bakunin left behind the memory of a revolutionary, because, to the extent of his understanding and ability, he fought selflessly for the triumph of revolution. His strong sides were his urge to work among the people, for the people, his uncompromising hatred of liberalism and his faith in the great future of Russia. Due tribute must be paid to the boldness and revolutionary energy of this courageous fighter against tsarist autocracy in Russia and the omnipotence of capital in Western Europe. He left a noticeable trace in this bitter fight.



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**Nikolai Chernyshevsky**  
**1828-1889**



## WAITING FOR AN EARLY REVOLUTION

Nikolai Gavrilovich Chernyshevsky – Russian revolutionary democrat, writer, scholar and literary critic, one of the outstanding forerunners of Russian Social-Democracy, was born in Saratov on the 24th of July, 1828, in the family of a priest. In social status he belonged to the *raznochintsi*, Russian 19th-century intellectuals of non-gentle birth, who played a large part in the history of the Russian liberation movement.

He began his studies at the age of seven, under the supervision of his father, a well-educated and well-read man. Books played an important part in the boy's spiritual development. In 1842, at the age of 14, having gone through the programme of a theological school at home, he became a pupil in the Saratov seminary. This institution was "renowned" for the scholasticism of its instruction and the ignorance of most of its teachers. This was particularly clear to the well-read Chernyshevsky, who had a good knowledge of many subjects and by the time he entered the seminary had already learned Latin, Greek, Hebrew,

French, Polish and German. In the seminary he mastered Tatar and Arabic. He enjoyed general respect among his fellows, not just for his mind and his knowledge but also for his friendly willingness to help.

At the age of eighteen he decided to leave the seminary and enter the historico-philological department of St. Petersburg University. His father approved his wish to abandon the idea of becoming a priest.

At university he became friends with another student M. L. Mikhailov, subsequently well known as a revolutionary poet who died while serving a sentence of penal servitude. Mikhailov was the grandson of an emancipated peasant, and in him Chernyshevsky found a fine comrade and a brilliant connoisseur of world literature. Their common social views also brought them close together and Chernyshevsky was to say later on that it was Mikhailov who gave him the first push towards early development. Their friendship helped to broaden Chernyshevsky's horizons on questions of literature and politics.

He joined the circle of I. I. Vvedensky, a progressive teacher and man of letters, and this strongly influenced his subsequent revolutionary views. Here he learned about the French thinker Fourier and his teaching on the restructuring of society on just foundations, and was advised to read his works. He became interested in Fourier and immediately detected germs of great truths in his teaching. In spite of their mystical slant he could see in Fourier's works sources of fruitful

social ideas which he developed further in his own remarkable work *What Is to Be Done?*

He made a thorough study of German philosophical literature, first and foremost of Hegel and Feuerbach. The materialism of the latter, and his criticism of religion made Chernyshevsky reconsider many of his own views, and by 1850 he had become a convinced and militant atheist.

His political views also changed. Whereas in the mid-1840s he was dreaming of devoting himself to educational work, by the end of the decade, particularly after the revolutionary events in Western Europe, he decided to devote all his energy to spreading revolutionary ideas so as to prepare the people for the overthrow of tsarism.

He became, as he himself said, a firm supporter of socialists, communists and extreme republicans. Analysis of the revolutionary experience of 1848 led him to the conclusion that to transform society by peaceful means was impossible, and revolution alone could free the working people from the yoke of slavery.

He foresaw changes and prepared himself for them. His understanding of past and present events became ever deeper, his premonition of the future more clearly defined. As a result of his deep study of the works of the great Utopian socialists and German philosophers, a hatred of despotism, serfdom and autocracy finally matured in him.

A week before his final examinations he learned that there was a vacancy for a teacher in Saratov. In 1851 the young teacher of literature

stepped across the threshold of the Saratov gymnasium. In those stuffy provincial surroundings Chernyshevsky's lessons were unusually new and interesting. Every day he would return home surrounded by numerous pupils, with whom he carried on friendly conversations. In January 1853, in the home of his relations, he met Olga Sokratovna Vasilyeva and in February proposed to her. His proposal was oddly worded and quite unexpected. "It seems to me," he said to his future wife, "that at any minute the gendarmes will appear, take me off to St. Petersburg, and lock me up in a fortress for God knows how long. The things I am doing here smell of hard labour." Olga Sokratovna was not frightened by the future difficulties and accepted his proposal.

The wedding, saddened by the sudden death of his mother, took place in the spring of 1853, and soon afterwards the young couple moved to St. Petersburg, where Chernyshevsky immediately set about realising his numerous plans. His main desire was to try his hand in the field of letters, but he knew that for this he needed time and preparation. Therefore his first aim became to acquire an academic degree which would entitle him to a university chair. He began to work as a teacher and applied to the administrator of the educational district for permission to take the examinations for a master's degree.

Family life in the capital involved quite a lot of expenses, so he did not restrict himself to teaching, but also gave private lessons, did proof-reading and worked on magazines.

Work on his dissertation was proceeding successfully. The theme was "Aesthetic Relations of Art to Reality", and in his thesis he had decided to show the reactionary essence of idealistic notions of art and contrast them with revolutionary-materialistic aesthetics, reflecting the traditions of advanced philosophical thinking in Russia. He defended his thesis on May 1855. He was the first to substantiate the materialist theory of art.

In the autumn of 1853 he had begun to contribute to the magazine *Sovremennik* (Contemporary), which was very popular in democratic circles. His very first articles, which were distinguished by their striking erudition, depth of thought and consistent democratic trend, attracted attention to him. In a comparatively short space of time he wrote numerous works on domestic and foreign policy, philosophy, history, political economy and the theory and history of literature, among them were *Essays on the Russian Literature of Gogol's Period*, *Lessing*, *A Critique of Philosophical Bias Against Communal Ownership*, *The July Monarchy*, *The Anthropological Principle in Philosophy*, *Capital and Labour* and others.

Chernyshevsky became one of the leaders of the magazine and its ideological inspiration. He made use of many publications on literary questions for criticising serfdom, propaganda of revolutionary ideas and for defending the interests of the broad peasant masses. In particular, in his article "On Land Ownership" he shows that the best form of land ownership for agriculture is one

that combines the owner, the manager and the worker in one person. State property with communal ownership is, in his opinion, the system that comes closest to this ideal.

In his article "Unaddressed Letters", Chernyshevsky subjected the reform of 1861 to sharp criticism and unmasked its undemocratic, predatory character. Incidentally, the censor hastened to remove it from the issue and it was not until 1874 that it appeared abroad.

The revolutionary democrats realised that the people were not yet ready for revolution, and therefore they did everything in their power, legal or illegal, to spread their ideas. The magazine carried on great work in preparing the masses for revolution. According to Chernyshevsky, they strove to influence the peasantry and to instill in him the realisation of the great role he is to play in the liberation of the country from the autocratic yoke. This idea was particularly clearly expressed in his article "Isn't This the Start of Changes?" published in the 11th issue for 1861.

The revolutionary spirit of *Sovremennik* could not escape the attention of the authorities, and in June 1862, the magazine was suspended for eight months, for its "harmful trend", and soon afterwards Chernyshevsky was arrested and confined in the Alekseyevsky ravelin in the Peter and Paul Fortress.

Lenin, describing Chernyshevsky as a revolutionary democrat, pointed out that he "was able to exercise a revolutionary influence by advocating, in spite of all the barriers and obstacles

placed in his way by the censorship, the idea of a peasant revolution, the idea of the struggle of the masses for the overthrow of all the old authorities".<sup>1</sup> Chernyshevsky believed that the Russian revolution was near and was determined to take part in it. He considered the immediate task of revolutionary democracy to be the ending of serfdom and the solution of the agrarian problem in the interests of the toiling peasantry, but his final goal was socialism.

His activity was particularly impressive during the years of the first revolutionary situation, when, according to Lenin, the whole country was listening attentively to "the powerful appeals of Chernyshevsky, who was able, by means even of censored articles, to educate genuine *revolutionaries*".<sup>2</sup>

In his publications he dealt irresistible blows to tsarist autocracy and serfdom, and exposed the bourgeois-liberal illusions about the benefits of the 1861 reform. He did not limit himself to preaching the idea of a peasant revolution in his articles, but addressed the people directly with the illegal proclamation: "Greetings to the Manorial Peasants from Their Well-Wishers", in which he exposed tsarism, explained to the peasants the class character of tsarist power as the primary landowner, and called on them to prepare themselves for an uprising and not to hope for reforms.

In his "Unaddressed Letters", summing up the results of the "emancipation" of the peasants, Chernyshevsky pointed out that the reform was

hostile to the interests of the people. The nobility, who took on themselves the implementation of the reform, proceeded, above all, from their own selfish interests. Only the form had changed, while the essence of the relations between landowner and peasant remained as it had always been. He compared the reform with a patch put on old clothes. Just as a patch cannot prevent the destruction of rotten cloth, so the reform would not save the outmoded autocratic landowner system.

The tsarist government decided to cut short the activities of Chernyshevsky and his supporters. Mikhailov was the first victim. On December 14, 1861, he was sentenced to 12 years' penal servitude in Siberia. Chernyshevsky's flat was searched on July 7, 1862, and although it yielded nothing and the police did not have any legally valid evidence of his unlawful activities he was nevertheless arrested.

However, even in the Peter and Paul Fortress he did not lay down his arms. During four months behind the bars he wrote the novel *What Is to Be Done?*

In this work he embodied in artistic form the socialist ideas which he had advanced in his theoretical works. The novel was a textbook of life for many generations of readers, because the problems dealt with in it were those which occupied the advanced Russian intelligentsia: what was to be done to rid the country of the yoke of autocracy and serfdom?

With deep passionate conviction he portrayed



“people of old” with their dullness, cowardice, their rapacious thirst for profit, and side by side with them—the “new people”, the *raznochintsi*-democrats. The most impressive figure in the novel is Rakhmetov, in whom for the first time in Russian literature the author depicted a revolutionary, prepared to undergo any ordeal in the struggle for the cause of the people, and showed convincingly that only by combining personal and social interests is the true happiness of the individual possible.

The society of the future, a socialist society, is the ideal. The author freely interrupts the narrative with digressions, and conversations with the reader. He appears as one of the characters in the novel, frequently engages in polemics with the “perceptive reader”, a collective figure, embodying the views usually held by liberals and reactionaries of the time. This method enabled Chernyshevsky to ridicule the liberal talkers.

After its publication in the *Sovremennik* the novel was banned by the censor and was not republished until 1905, but copies of the magazine containing it were passed from generation to generation.

Five months after the completion of *What Is to Be Done?* Chernyshevsky wrote his story “Alfer-yev. From Reminiscences About the New People”. At the same time he was engaged in translation: while in the fortress he translated *History of the 19th Century* by Gervinus, two volumes of Macaulay’s *History of England*, two volumes of Schlosser’s *World History*, wrote 29 stories, an

autobiographical story, several articles, *Principles of Political Economy* (according to Mill) and a large number of other scholarly works and translations. In addition, he had to write numerous judicial depositions, explanations and various letters connected with the charge against him. This enviable capacity for work once again bore witness to Chernyshevsky's devotion to his cause, his passionate desire to be at the centre of events, even while within the gloomy walls of the Peter and Paul Fortress.

On the 19th of May, 1864, the ceremony of civil execution of Chernyshevsky took place in Mitninskaya Square in St. Petersburg. This medieval ceremony had the object of disgracing the offender in the eyes of society. He was made to kneel, and a sword was broken over his head. The place of execution was surrounded by a reinforced detachment of gendarmes but in spite of this the young students openly greeted the "state criminal" and threw bouquets of flowers onto the platform. In the evening of May 20th, 1864, escorted by two gendarmes he was taken off to Siberia. After the long and difficult journey his health was ruined and on the doctors' insistence he was sent to the hospital in the settlement of Kadaya under military guard. Here he met the friend of his youth and comrade-in-arms in the struggle for people's cause, Mikhailov. Tsarist hard labour and the rigorous climate had done their work: Mikhailov's health was ruined. When six months later, Chernyshevsky, now recovered, came to take leave of him before going back to

the mines, the poet had only a few more months to live.

Chernyshevsky lived in a tumbledown hut at the Kadaya mine. Altogether, he spent twenty years in Siberia, seven of them in penal servitude in the Nerchinsk mines, all the time under the most vigilant, but secret, surveillance. The prison authorities did everything to prevent his flight or liberation.

In 1868 the authorities in St. Petersburg hastened to warn the Nerchinsk prison warders that the amnesty did not extend to him. Moreover, even after the expiry of his seven-year term of penal servitude he was not released but, committing another foul crime, the tsarist government sent him to the prison at Vilyui for another twelve long years of still more severe moral and physical trials. An iron will was required to emerge the victor in such an unequal battle. Meanwhile, revolutionary circles made several attempts to free him, but all were unsuccessful. With unparalleled courage and staunchness Chernyshevsky bore all the burdens of hard labour in Nerchinsk, the solitude of the damp, gloomy chamber in the Vilyui prison. He spent nearly twelve years under the escort of Cossacks and gendarmes. Living conditions were extremely hard. Deprived of company, isolated from the ebullient activity, literally buried alive, he lived through these difficult years with great dignity.

In spite of the fact that all his works were banned, and his name was not allowed to be mentioned in the press, even in exile he took

every opportunity to continue his literary and scholarly activity, and every parcel of books gave him enormous pleasure. He wrote a lot in the most varied fields of knowledge. His letters to relatives frequently acquired the form of original theoretical studies, devoted to questions of philosophy, history, natural science, and political economy, and these writings done under surveillance, betrayed his colossal erudition, the zeal of a revolutionary enlightener and the strength of his convictions.

The most outstanding work written while in exile in Siberia, is his novel *Prologue*, the action of which takes place in 1857, the period of preparation for peasant reform. He portrays different layers of St. Petersburg society and the sharp ideological struggle of the revolutionary democrats against the feudal landowners and liberals, and insistently propagates the idea of an armed uprising.

In January 1871, he managed to send his wife the manuscripts of his novel *Prologue*, the story *One Girl's Story*, the first three chapters of the story *The Descendant of Barbarossa*, and three plays, including *A Drama without a Denouement* and *The Magnanimous Husband*. With the exception of the first part of *Prologue*, brought out in London in 1877, they were all published posthumously.

In August 1883 he was taken to Irkutsk, where he learned that he was to be transferred to Astrakhan. On October 22, after a two-month journey, he arrived in his native Saratov, where

he was allowed to make a short stay to see his relatives. Fearing disturbances and sympathy for Chernyshevsky the authorities lodged him in the home of the colonel of gendarmes, and it was here that he met his wife. They agreed that she would set off the next day by steamer to Astrakhan, where Chernyshevsky himself arrived on October 27. Soon afterwards his sons, whom he had left behind as children, arrived from St. Petersburg. Alexander was now 29 and Mikhail 25.

After his transfer from Siberia to exile on the Volga he wanted to launch a magazine, to gather together the best literary talents. He wanted to write new novels and stories, a universal history of man, an encyclopaedia of human knowledge, but the police regime interfered with these plans. In 1888 he published an article "The Origin of the Theory of the Benefit of the Struggle for Life", sharply criticising Malthus's well-known theory which, in order to justify the bourgeois system, explained the poverty and suffering of the working people by "the lack of common sense among the masses in the matter of reproduction". In order to remind the younger generation of the great figures of the 1860s he wrote his reminiscences of Nekrasov and Dobrolyubov, and prepared the work *Materials for a Biography of Dobrolyubov*. This most valuable book was published in 1890, after his death.

Chernyshevsky's creative searches followed the same direction as those of Marx and Engels. But economic and political conditions in semi-feudal

Russia were a far cry from the conditions of life in the leading Western European countries. The proletariat was only just being formed, the revolutionary struggle of the peasantry had not risen above the level of isolated spontaneous outbursts.

Nevertheless, in spite of the immaturity of socio-economic and political relations, Chernyshevsky came close to dialectical materialism and made an appreciable contribution to the development of social thinking.

He was an irreconcilable critic of capitalism and a supporter of communism. He evaluated the bourgeois system from the position of a defender of the working people, ruined by capitalism. It is important to note that he made a brilliant conjecture when he said that the coming of socialism was natural and unavoidable in view of the fact that it was conditioned by the very nature of social production. In this connection he wrote: "...if the character of the productive processes has changed, then the character of labour would certainly change too and, consequently, there was no reason to fear for the future of labour: the inevitability of its improvement is already present in the development of the productive processes themselves." <sup>3</sup>

He maintained that in historical life the common people must gain supremacy; and they were the only ones to whom the system called socialism was both advantageous and necessary. But because of the backwardness of socio-economic relations in Russia of the 1860s Chernyshevsky could not see that only the development of capi-

talism and a proletariat could create the conditions and social force for the transition to socialism. He was a Utopian socialist and, naturally, idealised the patriarchal peasant commune, thinking it possible to go over to socialism through it.

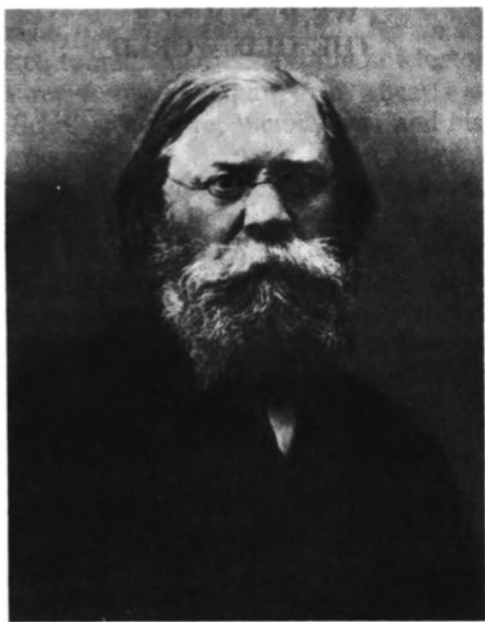
In spite of the fact that Chernyshevsky and the revolutionary democrats led by him—the ideologists of the revolutionary peasantry—remained Utopian socialists, they came closest of all thinkers in the pre-Marxist epoch to scientific socialism. They fought boldly against autocracy, for the freedom of the people. Chernyshevsky's revolutionary democratism rested on his materialistic philosophy, developed during the struggle against reaction and liberalism. Lenin noted: "Chernyshevsky is the only really great Russian writer who, from the 1850s until 1888, was able to keep on the level of an integral philosophical materialism and who spurned the wretched nonsense of the neo-Kantians, positivists, Machists and other muddleheads." <sup>4</sup>

Chernyshevsky worked hard and intensely during his last years of exile in Astrakhan, where he spent more than five years. Thanks to the constant efforts of his relatives and friends he was allowed to return to his native Saratov in 1889, but he spent only four months there until his death on October 17, 1889. His funeral turned into a mass demonstration. A flood of telegrams and letters of condolence poured into Saratov. The police department instructed the local authorities to forbid a funeral service, but to seek out and catch the ringleaders. The funeral was

closely watched by the police. A huge crowd of people accompanied him in silence. Right up to the revolution of 1905-1907 the “dangerous name” of Chernyshevsky was not even allowed to be mentioned.

Nikolai Gavrilovich Chernyshevsky was deeply convinced of the justness of the cause to which he devoted his life.





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**Pyotr Lavrov**  
**1823-1900**

## **WE RENOUNCE THE OLD WORLD**

A colonel at 26. A Professor in the St. Petersburg Artillery Academy. A brilliant mathematician before whom all doors to a dazzling scientific or military career were wide open. A professional revolutionary. One of the theoreticians of the "propagandist" trend of the 1860s. Political émigré. Poet. Member of the First International. A close friend of Marx and Engels...

It is difficult to believe that all these facts relate to one man, Pyotr Lavrovich Lavrov. An outstanding revolutionary who has influenced more than one generation of fighters for people's freedom, Lavrov is one of the people of whom Soviet Russia is justly proud.

There seemed to be nothing that foretold the eventful and difficult life that lay before him. He was born in 1823 into a wealthy family of landowners. His parents were educated people with a liberal cast of mind. At the age of five Pyotr could already read Russian and French well, and by the time he was fourteen had added two more

languages, German and English. He was keenly attracted to mathematics, and fond of history and literature, frequently quoted by heart extracts from Schiller, Voltaire, Victor Hugo and his other favourite authors.

In 1837 he entered the Mikhailovskoye Artillery College in St. Petersburg. Days and months of study dragged on, governed by strict timetables, but to the inquisitive youth the knowledge he acquired in the classroom was inadequate. He organised a group for self-education and its members, with enviable constancy, absorbed everything that lay gathering dust on the library shelves. He got to know the works of Henri Saint-Simon, Pierre Proudhon, Charles Fourier, which did not leave him indifferent. He began to ponder on the life around him.

After completing his studies in 1842 he stayed on as a teacher of mathematics, and some years later, on the recommendation of Academician Ostrogradsky, he replaced the latter as professor of mathematics in the St. Petersburg Artillery Academy. In 1849 he was promoted colonel.

Yet neither the gleam of his gold-braided tunic nor his swift, almost dizzy career, could hide from him the sufferings of the Russian people and the despotism of the autocracy. Gradually, in conditions of the revolutionary ferment in Russia at the end of the 1850s and the beginning of the 1860s, he went over from liberalism to revolutionary democratism. The development of his world outlook was leading to this, his conscience called him to this, for in conditions of the most brutal

arbitrary rule and the plundering of the peasants, every Russian had to choose between serving the robbers and oppressors and joining those who were struggling against all this.

His first steps in this new field took a literary form. Attempts to explain the world around him developed into philosophical articles, approved by Chernyshevsky, in the pages of the magazine *Sovremennik*. Broadening his knowledge Lavrov turned not just to different branches of natural science but also to the history of science in general. This in turn prompted him to take up the study of history, sociology, anthropology and philosophy. In 1852 he began to publish articles on military matters and natural science, and in 1856 he sent five of his poems to Herzen in London. It was at this time that he wrote his first publicistic article "A Letter to the Publisher", in which he set out his views on the present and future of Russia. In his article "Little by Little" (1862) he ridiculed the hopes for a stage-by-stage transformation of Russian society through reforms. His book *Essays on Questions of Practical Philosophy. Personality*, had appeared in 1860.

In May 1861 the tsarist government tried to abolish university self-government, to limit access by the poor and to introduce a police regime into higher educational establishments. In September mass disturbances flared up in all the universities; the universities of St. Petersburg, Moscow and Kazan were temporarily closed. On October 12 students in St. Petersburg clashed with police, and 300 students were sent to the Peter and Paul

Fortress. Lavrov made a speech at a student get-together in the university and signed a public protest against the introduction of a reactionary draft of the university rules.

In 1862 he joined the secret revolutionary society *Zemlya i volya* (Land and Freedom). He was simultaneously editing the *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Russian Scientists and Men of Letters*, making use of his position as editor-in-chief to spread progressive ideas and popularise natural sciences. The *Encyclopedic Dictionary* sharply opposed religion as the fruit of ignorance and deception. For this reason it aroused the anger of reactionaries and was banned in 1863. The same fate befell the *Zagranichny vestnik* (Foreign Bulletin), which he published from 1864 to 1866. In March 1865 he proposed that the Literary Fund should give financial assistance to Chernyshevsky and petition the government to review his case. In this same year he organised the first ever Russian Society of Female Labour, took part in the Committee for Literacy and in the Society for Publishing Cheap Books for the People, to which he made financial contributions. Lavrov's public activities, his connection with Chernyshevsky, his speeches in defence of the revolutionary-minded students earned him the reputation of the seditious professor. He was placed under secret surveillance, and his public lectures were banned. As early as 1861 the government had opposed his election to the Chair of Philosophy in St. Petersburg University.

After Karakozov's unsuccessful attempt to

assassinate the tsar in 1866, a wave of searches and arrests swept the country, and revolutionary terrorists were sought everywhere. The police also visited the "seditious professor's" flat, and he was called before a military commission, but neither during the investigation, nor after it, did Lavrov hide his sympathy for Chernyshevsky. During the examination he was accused of "sympathy for, and closeness to, people known to the government for their criminal tendencies", and sentenced to nine months' imprisonment.

After his release from prison he was exiled to Vologda province where he wrote *Historical Letters*. These letters marked the beginning of his prolonged influence in revolutionary circles as the ideologist of Narodism. His book was regarded as the theoretical and moral substantiation of the role of the intelligentsia in the struggle for the people's freedom. *Historical Letters* appeared at a time when the radical Russian intelligentsia was at a cross-road. Lavrov, who saw in the intelligentsia the bearer of social progress called for them to pay their debt to the people. The Narodnik movement was launched largely under the influence of *Historical Letters*.

Lavrov preached that youth should go among the people, work with them and educate them. The people represented an irresistible force but had not yet become conscious of this. They needed help to realise their own strength, and only educated people could give them this help. It was the role of the intelligentsia to unite the unrealised strength of the people with the revolutionary idea.

In exile Lavrov became convinced that the government would never cease to watch his activities, and he decided to flee abroad. On March 1, 1870, he arrived in Paris with a false passport under the name of Doctor Weimer. Soon after his successful escape to Paris his mother followed him. She did not want to abandon her son and shared his exile until the end of her days.

In Paris he established connections with scientific circles and was elected a member of the Anthropological Society. At the same time he established friendly relations with the French socialists and in the autumn of 1870, on the recommendation of Louis Varlin, became a member of the Paris section of the International. In 1871, during the days of the Paris Commune, he was in the thick of events.

At the end of March he managed to send two reports on the events in Paris to Brussels where they were published in the newspaper *L'Internationale*. They set out in detail his attitude to the working-class revolutionary movement and the Paris Commune. He wrote that the revolution in France, which resulted in the Paris Commune, differed in principle from other revolutions. Its main feature was that the ordinary workers came to power, and he unreservedly declared his full support for the proletarian republic.

He went to Brussels on behalf of the Commune and there made a speech to the Belgian Federal Council of the International on the situation in Paris and called on the Council to assist the Commune. Then he went to London, again on

behalf of the Communards, to meet the leaders of the General Council of the International headed by Marx. Lavrov was one of the few people from whom Marx could get trustworthy information on events in France. He acquainted Marx with many hitherto unknown details.

He returned to Paris at the end of July 1871, more than a month after the last barricade had fallen. The best sons of the Commune were either dead or had emigrated. On August 9 Engels wrote to Lavrov that the number of his "Paris friends" in London, with several of whom he had dined at Marx's home early in July, was constantly increasing. "Several new people have arrived, about whom Williams no doubt has written to you, among them Vaillant, Theisz and Longuet." In the same letter he wrote, "it is essential for us to have a more authentic text of the Versailles court proceedings for our historical researches".<sup>1</sup> For the same purpose Engels needed a detailed plan of Paris and he asked Lavrov to find out the address of the publisher of such maps.

Lavrov met Marx again three years later, when the editorial board of the revolutionary magazine *Forward!*, on which he was employed, moved to London. When the third issue appeared, Lavrov sent it to Marx, and in a letter to Lavrov of February 11, 1875, Marx, thanking him for his gift, expressed special interest in the section "What Is Going On at Home". He also informed him that he had sent off to Lavrov the second German edition of *Capital*. The letter ends with:



"My health has considerably improved since my stay in Carlsbad, but I am still obliged to limit my working day; besides, upon my return to London I have caught cold which continues to affect me. I shall visit you when the weather improves. Yours Karl Marx."<sup>2</sup> From 1875 to May 1877 Marx and Lavrov frequently visited one another, discussing various natural science and social questions. From Lavrov Marx got interesting information about Russia and in turn helped the Russian émigré to establish and develop conspiratorial contacts with Russia.

Marx's death was a severe blow to Lavrov.

Marx's library contained quite a lot of books about Russia, written in Russian. After Marx's death Engels handed them over to Lavrov. "You," he wrote, "as the recognised representative of the Russian revolutionary émigrés, and an old friend of the deceased, have certainly more right than anyone else to a collection of books which has been got together, thanks to the devotion of your and our friends in Russia, with the aim of making it the kernel of a library for Russian revolutionary émigrés."<sup>3</sup> To the end of his life Engels maintained friendly relations with Lavrov.

Friendship with Marx and Engels, and acquaintance with their works were a wonderful school for Lavrov. He became more and more convinced of the necessity and possibility of revolution in Russia, but at that time he could not connect his hopes with the working class on his native soil. Experience of the Paris Commune

helped him finally to rid himself of his hesitations between liberalism and democratism which he experienced in the 1860s and strengthened his internationalist feelings. One of his undoubted services to the revolutionary history of Russia was his propaganda of the experience of the Commune and his education of Russian youth on its example.

From 1873 to 1876 he edited the magazine and newspaper *Forward!* (Zurich and London) which became the organs not just of the Russian, but also of the international working-class and socialist movements. The magazine had a wide readership and its influence was not limited to the underground. Lavrov was its chief editor and ideological leader.

At the end of the 1870s Narodism had exhausted itself and the Narodniks gradually turned to political terrorism. Lavrov's influence in Russia gradually decreased, differences of opinion appeared in the magazine, and in 1877 Lavrov moved from London to Paris where he organised (1878) a Russian-Polish revolutionary circle, established contacts with the Warsaw socialist underground and with the Russian organisations Cherny peredel (The Black Redivision) and Narodnaya volya (The People's Will) becoming the representative of the latter abroad. He carried out this responsible assignment with exceptional conscientiousness, well aware of the importance of his mission. He often succeeded in winning European public opinion over to the side of the Narodnaya volya.

Lavrov was one of the initiators of meetings of

various factions of the Russian revolutionary émigrés to discuss questions of socialist theory and the practical activities of Russian socialists within Russia. He organised the Russian Social-Revolutionary Library of the Narodnaya volya, the foreign Red Cross of the Narodnaya volya, edited, together with L. A. Tikhomirov, *Vestnik Narodnoi voli* (The Herald of the People's Will), (1883-1886), took part in the formation of the Socialist Library of the Zurich Literary-Socialist Fund and the formation of a Group of Veteran Members of the Narodnaya volya.

He still could not understand the historical significance of Marxism and the role of the proletariat in the coming revolution. Right up to his death Lavrov remained a sincere revolutionary and socialist, who had witnessed all the stages of the liberation movement of the second half of the 19th century, and still could not overcome his Narodnik illusions. In 1898 his friends in Paris celebrated his seventy-fifth birthday. There were many greetings and a great deal was said about his services to the Russian and world revolutionary movements.

He died on February 6, 1900. The whole Russian colony in Paris came to pay their last respects to the man whose powerful mind and pure heart had been their firm support and hope for a quarter of a century.

Speaking at the graveside in the name of French socialists, Paul Lafargue said that the comrades from Russia had every right to be proud of Pyotr Lavrov.

The name of Pyotr Lavrov will forever be associated with the history of Russian social thought and the Russian revolutionary-democratic movement. Among the inflexible revolutionaries, who called for building a new world, he occupies a special place as an outstanding revolutionary, scientist, thinker, teacher and poet.



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**Nikolai Mikhailovsky**  
**1842–1904**

## **BANG THE HEADS OF THE BIRD OF PREY!**

The Russian Empire... The double-headed eagle, symbol of the grandeur and might of the reigning dynasty. It seems to hover high in the air, casting a sinister shadow over the whole country, spying out sedition, seeking out plotters. It is the embodiment of the unshakeability of the existing system. It is the symbol of the unassailability of the autocracy.

"The Russian heraldic eagle has two heads, two greedy beaks, one, of the dynastic police, the other, of the bourgeoisie. Strike at both heads of the bird of prey!" wrote N. K. Mikhailovsky in the last century, calling the country's youth for the struggle against autocracy.

Nikolai Konstantinovich Mikhailovsky was born on November 15, 1842, in Meshchovsk, Kaluga province, to a family of poor gentry. He lost his mother very early and did not remember her. His father was a petty official and his stories of service in the time of Nicholas I left a deep imprint on his young son. His impressions of serfdom created the psychological foundation for the mood which he called the mood of a penitent nobleman.

His father died when Nikolai was in the fourth form of the secondary school and he was taken to be brought up by relatives in St. Petersburg. Incidentally, his guardians were not particularly interested in him, all the more so as the capital obtained from the sale of the property was very small.

His guardians placed him in the Institute of Mining Engineering, where the preparatory classes followed the secondary school curriculum. It was a private boarding institution, but no matter how the authorities tried to keep the pupils away from "seditious" ideas, which had spread among many sections of Russian society, they were not successful. Magazines opposed to the government were brought secretly into the institute, and it was here that Mikhailovsky began to read the *Sovremennik*, carrying articles by such idols of student youth as Chernyshevsky, Dobrolyubov and the poet Nekrasov.

In 1861 there were disturbances in the St. Petersburg University, as a result of which many students were arrested and the University was closed. This could not but affect other educational establishments, and in the Institute of Mining Engineering a clash took place between the cadets and the teaching staff. Mikhailovsky not only took an active part in student action but became one of the initiators of disturbances among the students. He demonstratively missed classes, refused to answer at examinations and stated openly that he had no wish to become an officer.

In the end he left the Institute (1863) and for some time prepared himself to enter the law faculty of St. Petersburg University, but was unsuccessful and turned entirely to literary work.

He entered the political arena when the government, which had just recovered from the confusion caused by the revolutionary situation of 1859-1861, embarked on the path of extreme reaction. The heaviest blow was struck at the progressive forces. Revolutionary circles and organisations were suppressed and their leaders arrested; the best publications were closed down. It seemed that nothing could promise the revival of the social movement, but at the end of the 1860s the first signs of awakening progressive forces appeared. It began with the intensification of the student movement, the reanimation of the press and the appearance of new leaders of the public thought, one of whom was Mikhailovsky. His first critical article was published in the magazine *Rassvet* (Dawn) in 1860.

Mikhailovsky's world outlook at that time is most fully revealed in his publicistic articles and notes on the women's question which appeared in the newspaper *Sovremennoe Slovo* (The Contemporary Word) and the weeklies *Rus* and *Yakor* (The Anchor) in 1863-1864. He counted himself a follower of Chernyshevsky, and even tried to organise co-operative associations of tradesmen as prescribed and recommended in the novel *What Is to Be Done?* Having received a small inheritance in 1864, he spent it on a bookbinding shop, but it, like many similar undertakings, did not exist very long.



By the time Mikhailovsky's world outlook had been formed Chernyshevsky had already been arrested. Nevertheless his works exerted an enormous influence on Mikhailovsky who, throughout the whole of his literary activity, honoured Chernyshevsky's memory and defended him from the attacks of critics and obscurantists. In the mid-1860s Mikhailovsky established close connections with revolutionary circles and organisations.

During this period he worked on a number of magazines until finally in 1869 Nekrasov invited him to *Otechestvenniye Zapiski* (Notes from the Fatherland).

In the 1870s and the beginning of the 1880s this periodical played the same role in developing public thought in Russia as *Sovremennik* of Nekrasov and Chernyshevsky had done earlier. The living link between these publications was the poet Nekrasov, who had gathered round himself a group of progressive writers and journalists.

The magazine attracted readers not only by its highly artistic publications, but also by its democratic outlook and ability to express the progressive ideals of the epoch. And, of course, at the very centre of all this was the struggle against the survivals of serfdom, and against everything that interfered with the democratic development of the country.

In the opinion of the staff of *Otechestvenniye Zapiski*, the progressive press must, in the final analysis, serve one aim—the political education of the people and the fostering of civic ideals in them. The most important programme of the

democratic press, as put forward in the magazine, was to awaken protest in the progressive sections of Russian society, and through them, in the broad masses of the people by way of systematic and merciless discrediting of the whole autocratic system in the eyes of its readers.

Mikhailovsky gave attention to this function of literature, in particular of the periodical press, in a lengthy article, "Dramas in Art and in Life", published in the magazine in 1879. He justly points out that it was not easy for the man-in-the-street to understand the contradictions of Russian reality.

Young progressive talents grew and matured in *Otechestvenniye zapiski*. Mikhailovsky's brilliant and profound in content articles in the first half of the 1870s made his name famous among the progressive, radical intelligentsia. He became so closely identified with the spirit of the magazine that after Nekrasov's death he found himself in fact heading the magazine as the youngest and most energetic member of the editorial staff.

In course of time he became so popular among the young people that he was rightly regarded as "the ruler of people's minds" of his generation. Lenin wrote of him: "The historic service that Mikhailovsky rendered the bourgeois-democratic movement for the liberation of Russia was that he warmly sympathised with the hard lot of the peasants, strenuously combated all manifestations of feudal tyranny, advocated in the legal, open press – if only by hints – sympathy and respect for the 'underground', where the most consistent and

determined *raznochintsi* democrats operated, and even gave direct personal help to the 'underground'." <sup>1</sup>

Characteristically, the name of the publicist appeared under articles covering the most varied topics. Very often an issue of the magazine would contain a serious sociological or publicistic article, a literary survey and a book review—all with the well-known signature, N. Mikhailovsky.

His fundamental conclusions and views were set out in numerous works and serious publicistic articles, of which the principal ones were: "What Is Progress?", "The Analogical Method in Social Science", "Darwin's Theory and Social Science", "Louis Blanc's Philosophy of History", "Idealism, Idolatry and Realism", "The Struggle for Individuality", "Freemen and Zealots" and "Heroes and the Mob".

He was also helping the revolutionary underground, and his co-operation with the Narodnaya volya was gradually expanding. He became one of the editors of *Listok*, published by that organisation. In his articles he castigated the tyranny of the ruling classes. His vivid, well-written articles, published under the pseudonym "Grogard", invariably aroused interest among democratic youth. Sitzings of the editorial board used to take place in Mikhailovsky's flat. He would supply the board with various documents exposing the policy of tsarism. The executive committee used to consult him on important questions of activities and tactics.

By 1882 differences of opinion on some ques-

tions had arisen between Mikhailovsky and the members of the Narodnaya volya movement. Whereas the latter were opposed to political struggle, regarding it as unnecessary and of benefit only to the property-owning classes, Mikhailovsky openly called for it.

In *Political Letters of a Socialist*, which appeared after the Voronezh-Lipetsk congress of the Narodnaya volya organisation Mikhailovsky displayed a broad understanding of the task of the political struggle, saying that it was the ending of the autocracy and not separate acts of terrorism against the tsar and his underlings.

The tsarist government saw in Mikhailovsky a dangerous and intransigent enemy. He was suspected, not without reason, of having close connections with the revolutionaries, and of concealing their underground press. But he was sufficiently careful, and no matter how hard the police tried to find evidence of his revolutionary activities they were unable to do so. Eventually they had to limit themselves to administrative exile, first to the Novgorod province and then to Vyborg where Mikhailovsky wrote his publicistic "Letters of an Outsider", and where he learned that *Otechestvenniye zapiski* had been closed down.

It was not until 1885 that Mikhailovsky was allowed to return to the capital, where he immediately became involved in active political life, and after his second exile joined the *Severny vestnik* (Northern Herald). His work on this magazine was extremely varied. Critical articles and bibliography were entirely under his control. In

addition, from November 1885 to March 1888 he had a regular monthly feature of literary notes under the heading "A Reader's Diary", in which he used to comment on topical social-literary events. However, his views on the magazine differed from those of its proprietor, Yevreinova, and in the end this led to Mikhailovsky leaving the magazine.

In addition to the *Severny vestnik* he also worked on *Russkiye vedomosti* (Russian Gazette) and *Russkaya mysl* (Russian Thought) but he did not become firmly attached anywhere, and did not manage to raise these magazines to the level of *Otechestvenniye zapiski*. In 1892 he joined *Russkoye bogatstvo* (Russian Riches), and from 1894 he was at its head, remaining its editor until his death.

*Russkoye bogatstvo* existed for more than forty years, reflecting the complicated and contradictory development of the Russian social thought at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries.

Mikhailovsky's first polemical articles directed against Marxism appeared in it at the beginning of 1894. He declared that he remained faithful to the traditions of revolutionary-democratic thought, and was opposed to the Marxists only because they did not wish to be in any kind of successive relationship with the past and decisively rejected their heritage.

Lenin pointed out that the journalists on *Russkoye bogatstvo* ascribed to the Marxists the ridiculous intention not to take into account the

sum total of social connections and interactions, whereas in fact, "Marxists ... were the first socialists to raise the issue of the need to analyse all aspects of social life, and not only the economic".<sup>2</sup>

Mikhailovsky remained a critic of Marxism to the end of his days. The main reason for this is his idealistic philosophical views. Lenin wrote: "In philosophy Mikhailovsky was a *step backward* from Chernyshevsky, the greatest exponent of utopian socialism in Russia. Chernyshevsky was a materialist, and to the end of his days (i.e., until the eighties of the nineteenth century) he ridiculed the petty concessions to idealism and mysticism that were made by the then fashionable 'positivists' (Kantians, Machists and so forth). And Mikhailovsky trailed in the wake of these very positivists."<sup>3</sup>

Mikhailovsky's idea of progress, set out in his article "What Is Progress?" (1869) became one of his important theoretical propositions. He came to the conclusion that progress is the gradual approach to the integrity of indivisibles, to the fullest possible all-round division of labour among organs and the least possible division of labour among people. From this definition came the theory of the all-round, harmonious development of the personality (the indivisible). Such development, according to Mikhailovsky, is incompatible with both feudal and capitalist division of labour inasmuch as the personality develops abnormally and one-sidedly and the personality, according to Mikhailovsky, is the basic

motive power of progress. From this came the necessity to raise the masses to the level of the highly-developed, conscious personality.

In spite of the historically limited and inconsistent character of this theory some far-reaching social conclusions were drawn from it. It was interpreted as a call to the struggle against the despotism of autocracy, against glaring social inequality, for a new social system, based on communal and collective labour, in which conditions would be created for the all-round development of the personality. Although these views also contain an element of utopian illusion, in their day they inspired those who were fighting for social development. A subjectivist interpretation of the laws of social development was characteristic of Mikhailovsky's theory of progress. He thought that the objective course of history radically contradicted democratic ideals. Insofar as man is an active force through whom the laws of history are implemented, he regarded the conception that "the laws of history are insuperable" as purely relative, supposing that the will of the individual could oppose these laws, could not only change them but also give them substance. Ascribing to materialists a fatalistic view of the development of the world, Mikhailovsky, in accordance with his subjective method of thinking, asserted that the primary cause of historical progress is the personality, the moral idea.

As a result he arrived at his theory of "heroes and the mob", which was one of his most fundamental errors. He had always been sceptical

about the possibilities of a people's revolution, but after the defeat of the revolutionaries in the 1860s that opinion was considerably strengthened.

In his theory of "heroes and the mob" he regarded the individual as the main creator of history, assigning a passive role to the "mob". True, whilst placing the solitary figure of his "hero" in the foreground he never forgot the people: he considered that the cause of the "hero", his task, consisted first and foremost in the struggle for the interests of the people. The people was ignorant, downtrodden and passive: it needed to be led along the right path so that the ideologists of reaction did not make use of its ignorance and downtrodden state for their own selfish ends. The duty of the intelligentsia was to make clear to the peasants what was good to them and what was not.

Mikhailovsky's ideas served as one of the theoretical sources for the Narodnik movement at the end of the 1870s and the beginning of the 1880s.

He was also linked to the Narodniks by his unfavourable attitude to the development of capitalism in Russia.

He did not see the growth of capitalism in Russia as inevitable. In his opinion, as Russia had begun to develop after Europe she could make good use of the experience of European civilisation and set out along another, more difficult but also much more humane path, which would develop the kind of relations between labour and property that existed in Russia, in the form of



communal ownership. Progress was not a one way, pre-ordained development. Russia had another possibility: bypassing the stage of bourgeois society and a bourgeois state, she could go straight to the best and highest social system – socialism.

Hence his hostility towards the Marxist view concerning the development of capitalism in Russia. He said that insofar as Russian capitalism was still in an embryonic state, it would be possible to influence consciously the economic life of the country and choose the character of their own economic policy. This was a typical subjective-idealistic approach to the problem.

The Narodniks were arguing on the possibility or impossibility of capitalism developing in Russia, whereas the Marxists were asserting that she had already embarked on the path of capitalist development. It was necessary, therefore, to demonstrate the untenability of the opinions of the Narodniks and one of their leaders, Mikhailovsky. Lenin undertook this task.

The first thorough critique of Mikhailovsky's views was set out by Lenin in 1894 in his famous work: *What the "Friends of the People" Are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats?* He showed, using extracts from *Capital*, the errors of Mikhailovsky and other "friends of the people". In his polemics with Mikhailovsky Lenin proved that Marxism has a world-wide historic importance both in the cognition and in the revolutionary transformation of the world.

More than ten years of polemics did not pre-

vent Lenin from giving a scientifically objective evaluation of Mikhailovsky and determining his place in the history of the fight for freedom. While criticising Mikhailovsky's idealistic works, and his rejection of the traditions of revolutionary Narodism, his liberal appeals to youth, Lenin paid tribute to the contribution of this public figure to the revolutionary movement. He appreciated Mikhailovsky's witty and fascinating works, his ability to link the topic of the day with advanced ideals, his bold criticism of the vileness of life and his constant preparedness for the defence of the poor. Mikhailovsky's works called on the Russian intelligentsia to serve the interests of the people, aroused a feeling of personal responsibility for the fate of the country, upheld democratic traditions and opposed reaction.

"We pay tribute to Mikhailovsky for the sincere and skilful struggle he waged against the serf-owning system, the 'bureaucracy' (we beg to be excused for this loose term), and so forth," wrote Lenin, "for his respect for the 'underground' and the assistance he rendered it, but not for his bourgeois-democratic views, or his vacillating tendencies towards liberalism, or his 'Social-Cadet' group of *Russkoye bogatstvo*."<sup>4</sup>

Nikolai Konstantinovich Mikhailovsky died suddenly of a heart attack on January 28, 1904. His funeral turned into an impressive demonstration. About five thousand people followed the coffin, paying their respects to the defender of the oppressed people.



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**Georgi Plekhanov**  
**1856 – 1918**

## THERE IS NO OTHER WAY OUT FOR US

Before G. V. Plekhanov had the right to say at the constituent congress of the Second International in Paris: "The revolutionary movement in Russia can triumph only as a working-class revolutionary movement. There is not, and cannot be, any other way out for us," Russia had trodden a long, agonizing road in search of a revolutionary theory that would bring her freedom from autocracy and exploitation.

Cannon salvos in December 1825 on Senate Square had announced the first steps along this road. It was continued in unsuccessful attempts to stir up peasant insurrections, in daring attempts on the life of the tsar and his officials and in utopian dreams of "communal" socialism. But neither the revolutionaries from the ranks of the gentry nor the Narodniks were able to liberate the country. Nevertheless, their sacrifices were not in vain.

The new generation of revolutionaries began to understand that the future of Russia lay in the working-class revolutionary movement, armed with

the most advanced theory, the theory of Marxism.

Georgi Valentinovich Plekhanov became one of those people.

He was born on December 29, 1856, in the village of Gudalovka in the Lipetsk district of Tambov province, into an impoverished family of gentry. His father, Valentin Petrovich, was a man of stern temper, equally despotic in his treatment of his serfs and his children. He was satisfied with the life of an ordinary landowner, devoid of any spiritual interests, and therefore had no appreciable influence on the intellectual and moral development of his son. But his mother, Maria Fyodorovna Belinskaya, a woman of rare qualities, exerted a great influence on him. Maria Fyodorovna, in spite of her husband's choleric character frequently defended the serfs in her son's presence.

Plekhanov's childhood passed in his native village of Gudalovka. He acquired his primary education under his mother's guidance, and learned to read at an early age. Then he was sent to the military gymnasium in Voronezh.

In 1873 he entered the Artillery College in St. Petersburg. The barrack-like regime of this cadet college did not satisfy his spiritual needs and he managed to transfer to the Institute of Mining Engineering in 1874. But fate had prepared a different path for him, the path of a revolutionary. In the college he became acquainted with revolutionary-minded young people and plunged into the cause of liberating the people, a cause which occupied the whole of his life.

The Institute authorities hurried to get rid of this seditious student, and, in spite of his obvious success, he was expelled "for lack of success", in 1876.

In December of that year the Narodnik organisation *Zemlya i volya* (Land and Freedom), of which he was a member, decided to hold a political demonstration in St. Petersburg. On the morning of December 6 groups of workers and revolutionary students began to gather at the Kazan Cathedral. Many people assembled; this immediately put the police on their guard, and they began to move more men up to the cathedral. The young Plekhanov climbed onto the wing of the colonnade. He told the gathering about people who were being persecuted by the tsar because they demanded freedom for the working class. The demonstrators gathered there, he said, to declare to the whole of St. Petersburg, to the whole of Russia, their solidarity with those people: "Our banner is their banner. On it is written, 'Land and freedom for peasant and worker!' Here it is—Long live land and freedom!" At this moment a young workman, standing alongside him, unfurled a red banner, and voices took up the call: "Long live land and freedom! Long live the social revolution!"

Thirty-one people were arrested for demonstrating, but Plekhanov managed to escape. In accordance with a decision of the organisation he left his native land.

In 1877 he returned to Russia illegally and settled in Saratov under an assumed name. Here he

organised a Narodniks' circle and with the help of its members began to spread revolutionary propaganda among the factory workers in Saratov. The police got on the tracks of the clandestine flat and arrested Plekhanov. However, at the police station he managed to prove that he had no connection with the revolutionaries, and as the search of his flat revealed no compromising material, he was released. After this experience he decided to return to St. Petersburg.

He was the acknowledged speaker for the Narodniks. At the end of 1877 his voice rang out at the funeral of the poet Nekrasov, whom official Russia, even in this sorrowful hour, tried to pass off as their faithful servant. Two policemen tried to arrest Plekhanov after his speech, but he seemed to melt away into the crowd.

In the summer of 1878, he, like many other Narodniks, went "to the people". He went to the Don, where the Cossacks opposed the zemstvo self-government. He made contact with a group of young Cossacks who were ready to stir up an insurrection, but he was well-aware that for a successful rising the whole Cossack population would have to be involved. He therefore wrote an appeal in the name of *Zemlya i volya*, addressed to the Don Cossacks, and the Cossacks of the Ural, the Kuban and Terek and went off to St. Petersburg to have it printed there. But when he got there he learned of the downfall of *Zemlya i volya* and the arrest of many of its leaders. In 1879 the organisation split into two: *Cherny peregodel* and *Narodnaya volya*.

The members of the first organisation headed by Plekhanov, P. Axelrod, V. Zasulich and others, championed the allocation of land to poor peasants, believed in a peasant revolution and condemned individual terror. The members of the second—A. Zhelyabov, S. Perovskaya, V. Figner, N. Morozov and their associates—paid great attention to the terrorist struggle, seeing in it a means of arousing the masses to revolutionary action.

In 1879 the police began a search for Plekhanov and he had to change his passport every two or three months. A massive reward was promised for his capture, and he was forced to flee abroad.

He spent thirty-seven years in exile: in Switzerland, France and Italy. He established contact with the leaders of West European Social-Democracy—W. Liebknecht, K. Kautsky and J. Guesde, made a detailed study of revolutionary literature, and sought for new ways of the struggle. In exile he read the works of the founders of Marxism with enormous interest, and studied the experience of the revolutionary struggle of the working-class and of the West European Social-Democratic parties.

His study of Marxist literature enabled him to correctly assess the essence of the Narodnik movement and its ideology, and gradually overcome the Narodnik myth of “Russian distinctiveness”. Plekhanov was one of the first to see that capitalism was actively developing in the country and that the Russian proletariat was emerging



into the arena of the class struggle. Narodism was becoming a backward ideology that did not reflect the new economic and political changes in the country. Marxism was gaining one victory after another in the West, mass proletarian parties were being formed under its banner, and it was becoming an invincible force. Plekhanov sowed the seeds of Marxism on the prepared soil of Russia and for twenty years was the constant propagandist of scientific socialism.

His assimilation of Marxism was also helped by the fact that the Russian revolutionary democrats Belinsky and Chernyshevsky had a great influence on the formation of his world outlook. The study of the works of Russian revolutionary thinkers led Plekhanov close to Marx's theory and a profound knowledge of the works of Marx and Engels shaped his Marxist world outlook. Arming himself with the revolutionary theory of Marxism and the experience of the European working-class movement, Plekhanov, at the beginning of the 1880s gradually rid himself of Narodnik views.

In 1883, in Geneva, together with Axelrod, Zasulich, Ignatov and Deich, he formed the first Russian Social-Democratic group *Osvobozhdeniye truda* (Emancipation of Labour), whose aim was to spread scientific socialism in Russia and to prepare for the organisation of a Russian working-class Social-Democratic party.

This group set itself quite concrete goals, formulated best of all by Plekhanov himself: to spread the ideas of scientific communism by

translating the most important works of Marx and Engels into Russian.

In the fulfilment of this task its members translated, over a comparatively short space of time, and published in Russian the following works of Marx and Engels: *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, *Wage Labour and Capital*, *The Poverty of Philosophy*, and later on – *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*, and a number of others.

In addition to translations of Marx and Engels into Russian, the members of the Emancipation of Labour group wrote a number of independent works popularising Marxism and containing a Marxist analysis of Russian social relations. This was essential because Narodnik theories still held sway in the Russian revolutionary movement. In these difficult historical conditions Plekhanov was the first to show that scientific socialism was the only correct revolutionary path for Russia. The activity of Plekhanov and his associates was highly valued and supported by Engels, with whom Plekhanov had established friendly ties.

Lenin later emphasised that this group had laid the theoretical foundations of Russian Social-Democracy and taken the first step towards the working-class movement.

It should be remembered that not only the autocracy but also the Narodniks prevented the spread of Marxism in Russia.

The period of Plekhanov's brilliant scien-

tific-publicistic activity began with his active struggle against his former associates, and continued until 1903. During these years he wrote a series of outstanding works on basic questions of Marxism.

His work *Socialism and the Political Struggle*, published in 1883, provides convincing proof of his break with the Narodnik movement.

As an epigraph to his brochure *Socialism and the Political Struggle*, Plekhanov used the Marxist proposition that every class struggle is a political struggle. At the beginning of his work he noted that ever since the Russian revolutionary movement had finally taken the path of open struggle against absolutism the question of the political tasks of socialists had become the most vital and burning question.

Analysing the bankruptcy of the Narodnik movement he wrote that it based its programme on the so-called "ideals" and demands of the peasant population, but in doing so it addressed itself mainly to the urban and industrial population, insofar as it was precisely they who were more receptive to revolutionary propaganda. He emphasised that the practical activities of the supporters of Narodnaya volya, should at least be accompanied by a theoretical revolution in the minds of socialists.

After setting out the basic ideas of scientific socialism and analysing their unquestionable advantages over Narodism and anarchism, which were comparatively widespread in Russia at that time, Plekhanov came to the conclusion that the

vital task of Russian revolutionaries was the struggle for political freedom, on the one hand, and, on the other, the preparation of the Russian working class for their future independent leading role.

In his work *Our Differences* (1885) he made an even more detailed analysis of the bankruptcy of Narodism and the objective necessity to spread scientific socialism in Russia.

Proceeding from the fact that Russia had entered the stage of capitalist development, Plekhanov called upon revolutionaries of different trends to abandon attempts to revitalise revolutionary theories of the good old days and elevate themselves to recognition of the premise that Russian revolution would merge with world-wide socialism. He rightly emphasised that the communist revolution of the working class could not possibly grow from petty-bourgeois-peasant socialism. The village commune, would, by its nature, give way to bourgeois and not to communist forms of society, and could not, therefore, put Russia on the path to communism. Only the working class could take the initiative in a communist movement, and the emancipation of the working class could only be achieved through its own conscious effort.

His book *Our Differences* attracted the attention of Engels, who, after reading it, wrote to V. I. Zaslulich: "I am proud to know that there is a party among the youth of Russia which frankly and without equivocation accepts the great economic and historical theories of Marx and has

definitely broken with all the anarchist and also the few existing Slavophil traditions of its predecessors. And Marx himself would have been equally proud of this had he lived a little longer. It is an advance that will be of great importance for the revolutionary development of Russia." <sup>1</sup>

Plekhanov's work *The Development of the Monist View of History*, which gave a comprehensive criticism of Narodnik ideology from philosophical standpoints, acquired an especially important role in Marxist propaganda. In 1895 he succeeded in having it published legally in Russia. Its vague title was deliberately chosen to distract the eye of the censorship, and the plan was entirely successful. By the time the censorship had discovered its mistake, practically the whole edition had been sold out. The book should really have been entitled either *In Defence of Marxism*, or *In Defence of the Materialist View of History*, as Plekhanov wrote later on. This book is quite rightly regarded as one of the classic works of Marxism. It brilliantly displayed his theoretical and literary talent, and a whole generation of Russian Marxists was educated on it.

The enormous importance of his first Marxist works consisted not solely in his critique of Narodism. The supporters of the revolutionary struggle found in them a specific programme of action for Russian Marxists. Defining their most important tasks Plekhanov pointed to the pressing need to form a working-class party. He was deeply convinced that the further development of the working-class movement in Russia was inconceivable

without a militant organisation, armed with Marxist theory, and capable of heading and directing the revolutionary struggle of the masses, and leading them to the decisive assault on the old world.

Alongside his scientific and literary activities, from the end of the 1880s Plekhanov took an active part in the international working-class movement, strengthening his ties with the leaders of the Social-Democratic parties of different countries. His outstanding works, his speeches and papers delivered at international socialist congresses brought him fame as an outstanding Marxist theoretician, one of the recognised leaders of the Social-Democratic movement and a fighter against the opportunist distortions of Marxism.

Among the delegates to the First Congress of the Second International, which took place in Paris in July 1889, were A. Bebel, W. Liebknecht, P. Lafargue and Eleanor Marx-Aveling, and from the Russian socialists Plekhanov and Axelrod. After the congress, Plekhanov decided to go to London and realise his long-cherished dream—to make the personal acquaintance of Engels. Recollecting this meeting, Plekhanov wrote that he had had the pleasure of having long conversations with Engels for almost a whole week on a variety of practical and theoretical topics. This meeting was the beginning of an active correspondence between them.

The energetic scientific, publicistic and organising activities of Plekhanov and his group gra-

dually began to bear fruit. One after another, Social-Democratic groups began to appear in Russia, and the revolutionaries, banished from large towns by the tsarist government, set up such groups in their places of exile.

The members of the Emancipation of Labour group set before the intelligentsia the task of helping the workers to realise their historic mission and organise themselves into an independent political party by uniting the numerous socialist circles. Plekhanov saw this as the only means of solving all the economic and political contradictions of contemporary Russia.

At the same time the programme of the Emancipation of Labour group contained some mistaken propositions (for instance, its agrarian section was abstract in character) and had no mention of the question of the motive forces of revolution. Underestimating the revolutionary spirit of the peasantry, Plekhanov overestimated the role of the bourgeoisie in the struggle against tsarism. And yet, in spite of these deficiencies, the first seeds of Marxism, sown by Plekhanov and his group on the fertile soil of the Russian revolutionary movement, produced abundant shoots.

At this time the question of allies for the proletariat in the revolution became pressing, and Lenin found the scientific solution. The process of uniting the working class movement with Marxism was going on in Russia and the prerequisites for the foundation of a revolutionary party were being created. The St. Petersburg League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working

Class, organised by Lenin, became the prototype of a new kind of party.

Taking into account the increased influence of anarchism on the revolutionary movement in some West European countries, in 1894 Plekhanov wrote a pamphlet, *Anarchism and Socialism*, which was published in French and German.

His criticism of the Narodnik theory of heroes and the mob in his work *On the Question of the Individual's Role in History* is an important contribution to Marxist theory. The Narodnik theory, ignoring the role of the masses and reducing history to the activity of outstanding individuals led to the rejection of the political struggle of the masses. Such an approach in practical activities did enormous damage to the revolutionary movement then developing in Russia.

Analysing the theoretical conclusions of Marxism in the light of the practice of the revolutionary movement, Plekhanov showed that the theory of the mob and heroes was based on an anti-scientific, idealistic conception of the development of society. "Who destroyed the Bastille? Who fought on the barricades in July 1830 and February 1848? Whose weapons defeated absolutism in Berlin? Who overthrew Metternich in Vienna? The people, the people, the people, i.e., the poor working class, that is, chiefly, the workers. No sophistry can erase from history the fact that in the struggle of West European countries for their political emancipation the decisive role was played by *the people, and only the people*." Plekhanov links the inevitable triumph of com-



munism with the selfless struggle of the most revolutionary class in history, the working class, and not the activity of heroes.

At the same time Plekhanov scientifically determined the importance of outstanding personalities and showed that the strength of a really great personality lies in its realisation of the laws governing the historical process and its actions in accordance with these laws.

Plekhanov rendered great services to the revolutionary movement by fighting against opportunism and revisionism.

In the 1890s Bernstein and some other Social-Democrats, under the guise of developing Marxism, in fact renounced dialectical materialism. Bernstein's ideas spread swiftly in Western Europe and to some extent in Russia, too, becoming a serious threat to the further development of the international working-class movement. In the ranks of European Social-Democracy this open revision of Marxist views was not met with the proper rebuff. Even the Left forces, who were opposed to revisionism, could not duly repulse the revisionists, especially in the field of philosophy. At that time Plekhanov was the only person in the international Social-Democratic movement who consistently fought for the Marxist world outlook. Evaluating Plekhanov's services over these years, Lenin wrote: "...The only Marxist in the international Social-Democratic movement to criticise the incredible platitudes of the revisionists from the standpoint of consistent dialectical materialism was Plekhanov." <sup>2</sup>

In 1898 Plekhanov published an article "Bernstein and Materialism", which was followed by some more polemical works: "Conrad Schmidt versus Karl Marx and Frederick Engels", "Materialism or Kantianism", "What Should We Thank Him for?" and others.

At that time the revisionist trend acquired an international character, and the representatives in Russia of the Second International's opportunist line were "economists" and "legal Marxists". Therefore Plekhanov directed the sharp weapon of Marxist criticism against them too. He exposed the writings of the "economists" directed against the creation of a working-class political party, and belittling the role of socialist consciousness in the working-class movement as alien to Marxism. In his article "Mr. Struve in the Role of Critic of Marx's Theory of Social Development", he accurately qualified the essence of the literary works of the "legal Marxists", calling them a bourgeois parody of Marxism. He pointed out that both the "economists" and the "legal Marxists" were followers of Bernstein, spreading his opportunist and revisionist ideas in Russia.

Profound in content, simple and easily understood, Plekhanov's works exposed the revisionists and upheld the unity and integrity of the Marxist world outlook. Undoubtedly, these works became a contribution to Marxism and have not lost their importance even in our day.

Many of his theses sound so up-to-date that it seems as though they were spearheaded against present-day "theories" – against "democratic

socialism", "people's capitalism", etc. His criticism of the essence of Kantianism is still relevant today. In his philosophical works Plekhanov revealed the essence of Kantian dualism and agnosticism and explained why Kantianism became a philosophy of revisionism. "Kantianism," he wrote, "is not a philosophy of struggle or a philosophy of men of action. It is a philosophy of half-hearted people, a philosophy of compromise."<sup>3</sup>

Although Plekhanov was occupied with the problems of the development of the international working-class movement, he never lost contact with his native land. They were particularly strengthened when, under Lenin's leadership, the struggle for the creation of a new kind of revolutionary party unfolded.

His first meeting with Lenin took place in Switzerland in the spring of 1895 where Lenin had arrived to establish contact with members of the Emancipation of Labour group, and to negotiate the publication of a newspaper for the working class. Lenin made a deep impression on the members of the group, and, thanks to the meeting with him, a new stage began in their activities.

They established closer ties with the Social-Democratic movement in Russia, particularly with the St. Petersburg League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class. Soon after his return from exile in 1900 Lenin went for a second time to Switzerland to arrange with Plekhanov and other members of the Emancipation of Labour group, for the joint publication of *Iskra* (The Spark).

But disagreements between Lenin and Plekhanov were already arising on questions of tactics in the revolutionary struggle, on attitudes towards the ideologist of the liberal bourgeoisie Struve, and on the composition of the editorial board. In the end, a number of these differences were overcome.

As a result of Lenin's energetic activities, at the beginning of the 20th century the unification of Social-Democratic circles and committees into a single party was being successfully accomplished. This, in turn, demanded the elaboration of a draft programme and Rules for the party. Plekhanov was assigned to draw up the draft programme, and Lenin – to draw up the agrarian section and the Rules. But now more serious disagreements began to appear between these two leading Marxists of the day. Lenin criticised some of the propositions in the draft programme put forward by Plekhanov, in which there was no characterisation of Russian capitalism and from which any reference to the dictatorship of the proletariat had been omitted. Plekhanov disagreed with Lenin's idea on the nationalisation of the land. But by the time of the Second Party Congress members of the editorial board of *Iskra* had come to understanding on these questions on Marxist basis.

As a result of the great theoretical and organisational work of *Iskra* the Second Congress of the RSDLP (Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party) took place in 1903, which in fact founded the party and at the same time marked division of

the party into Bolsheviks and Mensheviks. Plekhanov opened the congress, proudly declaring that the Social-Democratic Party had become, in both theoretical and practical terms, the strongest of all the revolutionary and opposition parties existing in Russia.

But only two months after the Party congress, Plekhanov's mistaken views became the basis for his sliding down to opportunism. He began to preach the idea of getting on with the opportunists, whom he had recently been castigating.

Beginning from 1903 the Mensheviks, headed by Plekhanov, represented the Russian variety of international opportunism, and Plekhanov's political speeches over the next fifteen years were characterised by his retreat from the basic principles of Marxism. This political position of Plekhanov was the result, primarily, of his failure to understand the new epoch as the epoch of imperialism and proletarian revolutions, his failure to understand the importance of an alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry and of the leading role of the proletariat in both the bourgeois-democratic and socialist revolutions. His long break with the Russian working-class movement, and his connections with the Right-wing leaders of the Second International also had a negative influence on him.

During the first Russian revolution (1905-1907) he supported the Menshevik tactical line. He reasoned that since this revolution had a bourgeois character, its leader and main motive force might be the bourgeoisie alone. The working class

should not put forward slogans calling for an armed uprising or strive to set up a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry, for these actions might frighten off the liberal bourgeoisie and harm the revolution. The task of the working class was to assist the liberal bourgeoisie to seize power.

This once again testifies to Plekhanov's inability to understand the particular historical situation in the country, or to take into account the fact that the first Russian revolution had broken out in conditions in which the bourgeoisie, because of its reactionary nature, was incapable of heading a revolution. Having no faith in the power and ability of the Russian working class to head a revolution and lead the peasantry, Plekhanov denied the hegemony of the proletariat in a bourgeois revolution.

After the 1905-1907 revolution Plekhanov adopted a correct stand and joined with Lenin and the Bolsheviks in championing the necessity for a decisive demarcation with the factionalists. During this same period he opposed the Machist revision of Marxism. His work *Materialismus Militants* played an important role in the defeat of this reactionary philosophical trend. But Plekhanov was unable to find the correct line during the First World War either. He did not understand the imperialist character of the war on the part of Russia and her allies, regarding it as a defensive and therefore just war, and supported the defencist tactics and the defence of his native land—tsarist Russia. His incorrect assessment of

the nature of the war led him to the identification of the mercenary interests of the rulers with the national interests of Russia, and he believed that these interests called for support for the criminal policy of the government. As a result, Plekhanov did not join the Bolsheviks when they led the people into battle against the bankrupt capitalists and landowners. He returned to Russia after the February revolution in 1917. He could not understand correctly the new situation that had developed during the revolutionary transformations and opposed the course taken by the Bolsheviks to develop the bourgeois-democratic revolution into a socialist one. Moreover, he did not believe in the possibility of building socialism in Russia because of her economic and cultural backwardness.

He regarded the Great October Socialist Revolution with mistrust and incomprehension. He continued to repeat his thesis about Russia being not ripe for a socialist revolution, repeating the dogmas of the Second International's opportunists, according to which the proletariat should seize power only when it constituted the majority in the country. Neither could he, in 1917, rise to the understanding that Russia would be able to become the first country to pave the way to socialism, to whose triumph he had devoted the best years of his life.

During this period he published a number of articles and notes in his newspaper *Unity*, vainly trying to prove that Russia was still not sufficiently ripe for a socialist revolution. Yet when

those around him on the newspaper began to forecast an early end to the Soviets he replied that the Bolsheviks had seized power for a long time, possibly forever.

In the winter of 1917-1918 Plekhanov fell ill. After a hospital he went to a sanatorium in Finland, where he died on May 30, 1918.

His body was brought back to Petrograd and in accordance with his wishes was buried alongside Belinsky's grave in the Volkovo cemetery. On the initiative of Lenin, the young Soviet state undertook a number of measures to perpetuate the memory of this outstanding son of the Russian people, and a memorial to him was subsequently erected in the square beside the Institute of Technology in Leningrad.

Georgy Valentinovich Plekhanov, a brilliant and richly endowed personality, a man of great culture, an outstanding scholar and theoretician was the first Marxist in Russia. He occupies by right one of the leading places among the most outstanding public figures of the Russian and international socialist movement.



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Dmitry Valovoi is a Doctor of Economics and publicist on the staff of the newspaper *Pravda*. Henrietta Lapshina is an economist.

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